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Shaw

THE

WORKS

OF

REV. SAMUEL SHAW, M. A.

MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL IN LONDON.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

FIRST AMERICAN FROM THE ENGLISH EDITIONS,

CORRECTED AND IMPROVED.

VOL II.

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PRINTED AT THE OFFICE OF GEORGE CLARK,
FOR REV. DANIEL OLIVER.
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DISTRICT OF MASSACHUSETTS, to wit:

District Clerk's Office.

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JNO. W. DAVIS, *Clerk of the District of Massachusetts.*

THE

TRUE CHRISTIAN's TEST;

OR,

A DISCOVERY

OF THE

LOVE AND LOVERS OF THE WORLD.

IN TWO PARTS.

I. Of Man considered in his Moral Capacity, in one hundred Meditations, derived from 1 John ii. 15.

II. Of Man considered in his Political Capacity, in forty-nine Meditations, derived from 1 John ii. 15.

Non dubium est quam illud magis amemus quod anteponimus.
SALV.

In so saying thou reprovest us also.

To the Right Honourable Theophilus, Earl of Huntingdon, Lord Hastings, Hungerford, Botreaux, Molyns, and Moyls.

RIGHT HONOURABLE,

When men are once firmly persuaded of the certainty of another world, and do verily believe the doctrine of eternal life revealed in the holy Scriptures of God; there is all reason in the world, methinks, to conclude, that the first inquiry should be, How they themselves shall become partakers of it? For who can be imagined to be sincere in this belief of so glorious and blissful a state, who takes no thoughts how he shall obtain it, or not so many thoughts as what he shall eat and drink, and put on; who sits down contented, having given himself that cold answer which was given to the mother of Zebedee's children, *It shall be given to them for whom it is prepared?* Therefore to justify the sincerity of their belief, most men do fancy to themselves something or other that will entitle them to this happiness; though not so much perhaps because they account it so blessed a thing to obtain, as dangerous and shameful to miss it.

Among the many particulars that they do imagine will give them a claim to everlasting life, *the love of God* is one of the greatest, and as much pretended to as any. It is so universal a plea, that I scarce think there is any man who calls himself a Christian, but he will make it. Not to love God sounds so ill, that it makes the ears of the most profligate Christian to tingle, when it is charged upon him. But notwithstanding all these pretences to the love of God, it is most evident that a great part of the pretenders are indeed strangers to it; inasmuch as they may be convicted *of the love of the world*, which is inconsistent with it. To find out and cast out therefore the love of the world must needs be the most important inquiry and endeavour of man, of every man in the world.

Your Lordship will easily believe me, if I tell you, that although men be ever so great and high in the world, if the world be great and high in their hearts, the love of God is not in them. Although men have ever so much of this world's good, if at the same time they be unmerciful and uncharitable, the love of God dwells not in them. This is expressly the doctrine of the apostle James.

But to speak a little closer, though a man be instructed in all wisdom, and furnished with all variety of arts and sciences, that he can name all things as properly as Adam, or discourse of their natures as learnedly as Solomon; if yet the love of the world be predominant in him, he is but a vain pretender to the kingdom of heaven, a great stranger to the life of angels. Though a man know and believe all the wonderful doctrines delivered in the Holy Book, if this faith do not operate to the purifying of the heart from the love of the world, he is at present as far from having a true title to the kingdom of heaven, as they of whom the apostle gives this character, That they *believe and tremble.* In a word, although a man be a member of the purest and most reformed church, be ever so orthodox in his judgment, ever so constant and specious in external acts of worship, ever so even and blameless in his conversation, ever so exact in works of righteousness, and abundant in works of charity and mercy, if yet in his heart he prefer the world before God, he will be interpreted a lover of the world, and consequently an enemy of the Father.

I do verily believe, my Lord, that I do here present you with a treatise written about the most important inquiry in the world. They are Morning Meditations; stolen from the ordinary employment of my life; which I do present to the world, merely to advance the love and honour of God among men, and do dedicate to your Lordship in a grateful acknowledgment of your kind respects to me; and in testimony of the honour that I bear to your Lordship's good design of promoting piety, and establishing peace in this nation. I beseech your Lordship favourably to accept the oblation, and I heartily pray God, that as his providence hath made you Κράτιστον (very illustrious among the English families) so by his grace you may ever approve yourself *Tam re quam nomine* Θεόφιλον, [A Theophilus, a "friend of God," as much in reality, as in name.] Oh how blessed and honourable a thing will it be found, sooner or later, to be a sincere and ardent lover of God! To his grace and guidance I heartily recommend your Lordship, and rest,

My Lord,

Your Honour's most humble servant,

SAMUEL SHAW.

To the Right Honourable Thomas, Earl of Stamford, Lord Gray, of Grooby.

MY LORD,

I have little more to recommend me to your Lordship, than that I am your countryman and neighbour; which yet is a relation that your singular humility and affability is not wont to despise, though in a person otherwise despicable enough. But your Lordship's love of, and great desire to serve the interest of your country, does recommend you abundantly to the world, and does tempt me to speak of it in this dedication.

My Lord, I intend not a panagyric of your Lordship, which they who are actuated by a worldly spirit, and design worldly advantages, may think worth their while to contrive. May your praise be of God, and not of men! And of God I am sure your praise will be, if you be a predominant lover of him. I beseech your Lordship to strip yourself of all your worldly quality but an hour or two, whilst you peruse the black characters of a lover of the world, and the just motives to the love of God; and then, (whatever exceptions learned, or witty, or worldly men may make against these Meditations, which I believe will be many,) if you do not judiciously account the love of God to be the highest honour and purest happiness of man, I will be content (how loth soever) to be accounted not to be, what really I am,

Your Honour's most humble servant,

SAMUEL SHAW.

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PART I.

MEDITATION I.

INTRODUCTORY.

RETURN, O my mind, return. What dost thou so early in the world? Art thou not afraid, lest this unseasonable excursion should be a symptom of a lover of the world? And think, Oh think, what a dangerous, what a deadly thing it is, to be a lover of the world! Thou needest no more to convince thee of this, than that one plain text of the devout apostle St. John, *If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.*

Are not these words easily understood? Are they not alarming to every one who understands them? But if thou wilt reflect a little, thou wilt find that the whole Gospel runs in this strain. There is no doctrine delivered either more plainly or more frequently than this. The apostle James does as fully agree with John in this doctrine, as if they spake with the same mouth, James iv. 4. *The friendship of the world is enmity with God. Whosoever, therefore, will be a friend of the world*

is the enemy of God. And this he speaks, either as a truth generally known, or very important; as appears by the interrogatory form of speech, with which he introduces it, *Know ye not?* As if he should either say, It is a thing well known, or, well worthy to be known.

The apostle Paul, though junior to both these, knew this great doctrine as well as they, and delivers it almost in the same words with them, Rom. viii. 7. *The carnal mind is enmity against God.* He makes the spirit of the world and the Spirit of God directly contrary the one to the other, 1 *Cor.* ii. 12. Writing to the Galatians, he makes the plain end of Christ's giving himself for us to be, that he might deliver us from *this present evil world*, Gal. i. 4. and vi. 14.

He makes this to be the great privilege that he had by Christ Jesus, that by him he was crucified to the world. Writing to the Philippians, he makes it the short, but sure character of the enemies of Christ, that they *mind earthly things*, Phil. iii. 18, 19. And writing to his son Timothy, he gives him the reason why Demas had forsaken him, and the work and profession of the Gospel, viz. Because he loved this world; plainly intimating, that the Gospel and the world are inconsistent; one heart cannot hold them both. And all these do, though in different words, utter that which they had heard, or had been taught by their Lord and Master, who, in the days of his minstry, openly declared, *That no man could serve God and Mammon*, Mat. vi. 24. And at another time (as I suppose) in the same words, Luke xvi. 13, *Ye cannot serve God and Mammon.*

If this doctrine, delivered by so many and so worthy hands, be true, and cannot be spoken against, Return, O my soul, return.

Fuge, nata Deo, teque immundo eripe mundo.

[Fly, offspring of the Deity, and snatch thyself from a polluted world.]

Strengthen me, O my God, unto the hearty and effectual belief of this proposition, that I may be as afraid of the prevalent love of the world, as I would dread to be accounted (what is not to be named without horror) a hater of God!

MEDITATION II.

The Method of the ensuing Meditations.

My great design shall be, to determine who are *lovers of the world*, and distinguish them from the *lovers of the Father*. Since the love of God is the great commandment, and the great test of Christians; and the love of the world is so contrary to it, and so excludes it, it must needs be worthy of the most serious consideration of the most serious Christians, rightly to state and know the condition of their own souls in this matter.

But it will not be amiss first to take a general survey of the words of the apostle, 1 *John* ii. 15. and in a primary manner to glance at the several terms in the text. After that, I will consider the world in a physical and theological sense; and man in a moral and civil capacity. The world, considered in a physical sense, will afford

but little matter pertinent to my design; but the world, considered in a theological sense, will comprehend the things of the world, the persons of the world, the business of the world, the fashions of the world, the wisdom of the world, and the god of the world.

Under the things of the world, I shall comprehend the profits of the world, the pleasures of the world, and the honours of the world.

Whilst I consider such as love the profits of the world, I must meditate on injustice, worldly confidence, covetousness, carefulness, discontentedness, impatience, and uncharitableness.

When I consider injustice, I must treat of those that use undue means for worldly advantage; and those that use due means in an undue manner. Under the first of these will come to be taxed, stealing, defrauding, lying, oppression, bribery. Under the second will be taxed all those that offend in the degree, and in the season of seeking the world.

When I come to meditate on the lovers of the pleasures of the world, I must consider fleshly pleasures as unlawful in their matter, measure, manner, and season; and fantastical pleasures, under which I must meditate on revenge, idleness, and the desire of ease. And under this last, shall be considered worldly fear, viz. fear of sickness, fear of the death of friends, fear of poverty, and of persecution.

When I come to consider such as love the honours of the world, it will be proper to meditate on seeking the approbation of men, of pride in birth, pride in beauty, in apparel, in children,

in wit and learning, in riches, in strength, in privileges, in power and distinction, in virtuous actions, and in a party.

After the things of the world, shall be considered the persons of the world. And these are either one's self, one's relations, or other men. Under the first will be considered self-love, and the several kinds of it. To the last, will be reduced the base sin of flattery. When I come to consider worldly business, it will be proper to distinguish between a holy activity, and a sensual curiosity.

When I come to meditate on the fashions of the world, I shall have a fit opportunity to mention the sin of swearing.

When I come to consider worldly wisdom, the apostle St. James will direct me to meditate on it in this order, viz. on impure wisdom, on envious wisdom, on contentious wisdom, on implacable wisdom, on merciless wisdom, on unfruitful wisdom, on partial wisdom, and on hypocritical wisdom.

When I come to consider the god of this world, I must consider his servants, his allies, and his children. Under the first, I must treat of idolatry. Under the second, of witchcraft. And under the third, more particularly of self-will and ingratitude, and in general of the devilish nature.

And so I will conclude this first part, which concerns man, considered in his moral capacity, with a cautionary meditation, lest any one should falsely judge another man to be a lover of the world, who is not so; and will thus endeavour to prevent misjudging.

In the second part I will first endeavour to undeceive false pretenders to the love of God, and here treat of monastic persons, of the votaries of virginity, of the votaries of penance, of the Friends, and of pretenders to charity and righteousness.

And having discharged that examination, I will proceed to consider men in their civil capacity, and treat of conformists and non-conformists; of parents, guardians, tutors; of persons marrying, and giving in marriage; of patrons; of chaplains; of judges and magistrates, arbitrators, electors, jurors; of landlords and tenants; of tradesmen; of inn-keepers; of beggars; of wagerers; of gamesters; of debtors; of creditors, particularly of usurers. And so conclude with some dissuasives from the love of the world, and motives to the love of God.

MEDITATION III.

Of the World.

The world is taken either in a physical sense, or in a theological. In a physical sense, it signifies that vast globe that makes up heaven, and earth, and sea, and all things contained in them. But in a theological sense, it is put in opposition to God; as here in this text of the apostle John, and often elsewhere. The world, taken in a physical sense, is lovely; and its strength, beauty, order, and variety, are to be reverently regarded and admired, as the workmanship of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness. It is very

proud and profane, or very foolish, to despise the world in this sense, and to disregard the operation of God's hands. To despise the workmanship, reflects a dishonour upon the workman; and those that see nothing excellent in the world, may be justly suspected to see nothing above it. The Psalmist says, Ps. cxi. 2. *The works of the Lord are sought out of all that have pleasure in them;* and, I think, if we translate it, *have pleasure in him*, the divinity will be as good, if the grammar should not.

The best men are the best philosopers; for they make the best observations upon the admirable structure and furniture of the world; they see most beauty in it, who behold and admire the Divine Wisdom, Power and Goodness shining forth in it.

He that converses in the world, and beholds the many demonstrations there given, and the lectures there read. and does not from thence learn the Eternal Power and Godhead, is blindly stupid. He that does understand and know them, and does not love and admire them, is profane and proud; and so notwithstanding all his knowledge, may be truly said to *know nothing*.

Of these profane philosophers I shall have occasion to treat hereafter, among the lovers of the world. At present I only conclude, That philosophy, especially the philosophy that discovers and comments upon the stately fabric, the harmonious order, the magnificent furniture, and the admirable variety of the world; the proper causes and ends of things; is a very laudable study in its own nature, and may be a singular

means for the advancement of the name and honour of the blessed Creator.

It was an extraordinary expression of a person of great quality amongst us, when he was but about two and twenty years old, "That he could be content (even then) to quit this world, and all the pomps and hopes thereof, though it were for no higher felicity, than to be perfected in the knowledge of natural things." I cannot tell precisely what degree of value we ought to set upon philosophical learning; but this we know, that no man in the world, in any age, was more famous and admirable, that were those two princes of the Jews, Moses, and Solomon, who excelled in this kind of learning. And the great God himself has given much encouragement to study it, by those lessons of philosophy which he gave from the whirlwind to the eastern prince, and which are contained in the book of *Job*, chapters 38—41.

MEDITATION IV.

Of the world, taken in a theological sense.

The world, taken in a theological sense, is put in opposition to God; and so it signifies all that which is contrary to the spiritual kingdom of Christ, and warreth against it, and against true religion; all that which doth not comply with the will of God, or which withdraws the hearts of men from him; and consequently all that, which, besides the knowledge and love of God, men covet, delight in, or lament. In this sense it is said, 1 John

v. 4. *Whatsoever is born of God, overcometh the world.* And, *Gal.* vi. 14. that the true believer is crucified to the world, and the world to him. In this sense, the friendship of the world is said, by the apostle James, to be *enmity against God;* and by the apostle John, to be *hatred of him.* This is sometimes called Mammon, and is put in opposition to God: sometimes it is called our own things, in opposition to the things of Jesus Christ. And this appears to be the meaning of it in this text, upon which I am meditating, by the following verse; which explains the world, by the lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life; which, certainly, if they be put together, are of a large extent. In this sense we read of worldly lusts, *Tit.* ii. 12. of the τὰ τῦ κόσμυ, or, &c. or, the things of the world, 1 John iv. 5.; *of the fornicators of the world,* 1 Cor. v. 10.; *of the rulers of the darkness of this world,* Eph. vi. 12.; *of the spirit of the world, the wisdom of the world, the nations of the world,* Luke xii. 30.; *the men of the world,* which have their portions in this life. Ps. xvii. 14.; *the sorrow of the world;* 2 Cor. vii. 10. The world in a theological sense is in general, whatever is not God; and so even life itself may be called the world. The apostle James puts the theological notion of the world out of dispute, in that famous text, wherein he describes pure religion to be a keeping of one's self *unspotted from the world,* James i. 27. So then the apostle St. John means, if any man love any created being, he is a lover of the world, and consequently no lover of the Father, and therefore has not any true religion.

MEDITATION V.

Of the noble affection of Love.

If any man love, &c. The noblest affection with which God hath endued the sons of men, or even the angels of heaven, is love. For when that blessed Being determined to enstamp his own image upon the rational creature, He made it apt to love, as He Himself is love. God is love; and the power of loving, is his image. However liking, and lusting, and appetite, belong to beasts, love properly belongs to the rational creature; neither can there be any proper love, without understanding and choice. And those species of the rational creation that are most able to love, or able to love most, are the most noble and divine. Love is the union of the soul with the object beloved, and makes it as much one with it, as it is possible to be with a thing that is not itself.

Now how shameful a thing is it, that such noble affections should match themselves so basely; especially when such an excellent object is in view! The daughter of a mighty prince choosing a scullion boy for her husband, is not so incongruous, as the soul of man enamoured of the world; neither is the eagle catching flies, or the king of Israel hunting a flea, so ridiculous. The prodigal gentleman grovelling with the swine; or great Nebuchadnezzar herding with oxen, is not so absurd. The beautiful sun indeed, in its kind condescension, doth visit the very dunghills,

(as the glorious God is said to be even in hell itself) but will not lodge its beams there. But alas! this noble offspring of heaven, the rational soul; how familiarly doth it lodge and lie down with the world, and rest in the embraces of that which is not God! A debauchery of the most abominable kind.

Our bodies indeed are a part of the machine of the world; and it is no great wonder if they be delighted in it, as the beasts are. But for souls and spirits to immerse themselves in, to unite themselves to material objects, and transitory things, is as odious and as monstrous to behold, as the coupling of living men to dead bodies, which the poet describes as a great piece of cruelty in the tyrant Mezentius.

The style of the prophets makes it an argument of extreme desolation, when filthy birds and beasts do rest in a land, when wild beasts of the desert lie there, when their houses are full of doleful creatures, and owls dwell there, and satyrs dance there, and wild beasts of the wood cry in their houses, and dragons in their palaces, as the prophet Isaiah elegantly expresseth it, *Isa.* xiii. 21, 22. when the wild beasts of the desert meet with the wild beasts of the islands, and the satyr cries to his fellow, the owl rests there, the great owl makes her nest, and lays, and hatches, and the vultures be gathered every one with his mate, as the same prophet expresseth it, *Isa.* xxxiv. 14, 15. Filthy affections do certainly argue a desolate soul, forsaken of God, and forlorn; and they do extremely defile that which once was, and which ought to be the temple of

God. And what shall be the portion of these profaners, the apostle Paul tells us, 1 Cor. iii. 17. *If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy.*

MEDITATION VI.

Of the Love of the World.

Yet we must consider, what this love of the world is, that is so dangerous. And surely it must be granted, even by the devoutest lovers of the Father, negatively,

1*st*, That it is not every kind glance toward the world that constitutes this love. If so, we may well stand and wonder, and ask with the disciples of old, *Who then can be saved?* Although we may apply our Saviour's words to this, and say, If any man look upon the world, to lust after it in his heart, he hath committed adultery with it. Although discontent, nay, even the very desire of things is to be suspected; yet certainly it it too severe to determine that every single fond glance toward the world is this damnable love of it. There was a certain time, wherein the sons of God beheld the daughters of men; and I think there will be no time, in which they will be perfectly blind to them; whilst we carry about with us these bodies, it is to be feared that the beauties and gaieties of this world will be creeping in at our senses or fancies, and more or less infesting and infecting our hearts.

2*dly*, That a moderate seeking of the world, so as to provide things honest in the sight of God

and man, does not constitute this love. If it did, as the apostle speaks in another case, we must go out of the world: For we see there is no living in it, without some degree of caring for it.

No, it must needs be an immoderate, an excessive love that is so dangerous and fatal. If it be asked, What that is? I answer, Whenever it prefers the world, or any thing therein, to God, and to that which God is.

Alas, then, every single act of covetousness, in which the world is preferred to God, is vicious! yes, so it is, and pernicious, and necessarily to be repented of. And if it be a temper, it is that damnable love of the world here spoken of. This love must be predominant, and it must be a temper, or else it cannot denominate the man a damnable lover of the world. Lot committed incest, and I doubt not was drunken too; but I do not think the love of wine or women was predominant in him. David committed adultery, but I do not think that he was of an adulterous temper. But they that are influenced by a predominant and habitual love of the world, are the lovers of the world here spoken of; whether they be the covetous whom God abhorreth; or the proud, whom he resisteth; or the voluptuous, who are dead to the living Lord.

MEDITATION VII.

Men are to try themselves by their Love.

If any man love, &c. It seems that God doth estimate men by their love, not by their impul-

ses, nor their professions; not by their words, nor by their actions. For although it is true, that pure affections will ordinarily produce pure actions; and that as faith worketh by love, so love showeth itself by works: yet actions materially good, do often proceed from a principle not divine and pure, but carnal and corrupt. Therefore the great Καρδιογνώστης [Searcher of hearts,] trier of the reins, visits and views the hearts of men, and from thence he values them. It doth not only appear from this text, but indeed from the whole current of Scripture, that the estimate that God makes of men is from their hearts. Hence it is that we read so often concerning such and such men, that they had such and such faults and failings in their conversation or government; yet nevertheless their hearts are perfect with the Lord. And other men were thus and thus specious and zealous in their conversation; yet their hearts were not perfect with the Lord. And of others, that they were very formal and forward professors, but in the mean time their heart went after their covetousness. It were endless to show the special regard that God has to the hearts and affections of men.

And ought not we to estimate ourselves, as God estimates us? *If any man love*, &c. This surely is the chief, and, one would think, the easiest thing in the world to be known.

It is, without controversy, the chief thing, and most material for man to know concerning himself, what he loves best. If I know that God is the Supreme Good, and that it is my greatest duty and highest perfection to love him best; it

must needs follow, that it is my greatest concernment to know that I do so. For if I once attain to this understanding, I will not be beholden to any fortune-teller, to acquaint me with my future condition in this world; nay, I will thank no divine, to foretel me my condition in another.

Man hath nothing better than his affections, nothing nobler than his heart. Love is better than beneficence. Lazarus in being able to love, had a nobler portion than Dives in being able to give. And shall this heart, this love be given to the world? A man may converse in the world, and be concerned about it, and yet not love it; that is well; that may comfort us. But a man may also know God, talk of him, profess him, perform many duties to him, worship him with much pomp and seeming devotion, and yet not love him; that may startle us.

It is easy, in all other things, for a man to tell what he loves best. Cannot every man tell, what dish of meat, or what sort of drink pleases him best, or what neighbour he prefers most? And is it not a wonder that men should not know whether they love God, or the world best?

Is it not a wonder that men should be so mad or blind, as not to see themselves lovers of the world? Surely the heart of man is deceitful, and that, not only to other men, (as some would have the meaning of the text to be) but to himself also. I never yet knew a man that would confess himself to be covetous, though all the symptoms of covetousness were upon him. Though the plague-spots and sores are upon them, yet they will not confess themselves to be infected. To

undeceive (if it may be) the lovers of the world, is the design of the publication of these Meditations.

Lord, be merciful unto us, and suffer not our hearts to be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin!

MEDITATION VIII.

Of the extent of worldly Love.

If any man, &c. Methinks this phrase supposes that all sorts of men are subject to this evil, and liable to this disease. And indeed the more I think of it, (whether the text suppose it or not) the more certain it seems to be. When I consider *great* men, I do not see that they are so elevated above the world, as to despise it; neither are the *poor* so depressed below the world, as to despair of it; as it is in some cases. No; all sorts of men are subject to this plague; nothing secures us from it. *Riches* do not; it seems from the Psalmist, that the increase of them rather causes men to set their hearts upon the world; *If riches increase, set not your hearts upon them. Poverty* does not secure us; the poorer are the proudest oftentimes, and sometimes the most covetous too. *Holy orders* do not secure us; witness the greediness of the clergy of all churches. *Retiring into a monastery* cannot secure us; as the many unclean practices committed there will testify. *Holy profession*, or an early resolution in baptism cannot secure us; witness the multitudes that fight under the world's banners,

who then promised to fight against it to the end of their lives.

It is a great evil, and is found in company with learning, with inspiration, and the spirit of prophecy, as in Balaam; in company with prayers and sacrifices, as in Saul; in company with fortitude, as in Jeroboam; in company with zeal and profession, as in Jehu; in company with legal righteousness, much gravity, demureness, seeming self-denial and mortification, as in them, who in the Gospel are said to love *the praise of men, more than the praise of God.* It is found in conjunction with circumcision; neither is it washed away by that ordinance, that is called a *putting away of the filth of the flesh.*

But if we will come to a strict examination, we must consider man in his *moral*, and in his *political* capacity. And this (God willing) I intend to do in its proper place.

MEDITATION IX.

Of the evil of worldly Love.

If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. Lord, what a terrible thing is this that is predicated of so small a fault! He doth not love God! Why, what could have been said worse of him? If a man do not love God, he is as bad as a devil; he is cursed with the greatest curse; *If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema, Maran atha.* Who would believe that so fearful a thing should be predicated

of so small a matter! If he had said, if any man blaspheme God maliciously, oppose him spitefully, commit murder, be rebellious against all superiors, beastly in all behaviour, dwelleth in all pride and malice, or the like, then it had been proper enough that he should be esteemed a hater of God: But to say, *If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him;* who can believe this? Is it so great a matter to love the world?

Yes, from the predicate, we may infer how great a matter it is. The Spirit of God would not have predicated this of a thing of an ordinary consequence; every body declares against the sins of the flesh, rails at drunkenness, adultery, murder, injustice, extortion; every body brands thieves, and such like people with infamy: But the sins of the spirit are unnoticed, and destroy men's souls more effectually.

See how destructive a thing it is to misplace affections. Oh how sadly is the world mistaken! How weakly do men judge! How many will find themselves in hell shortly, who had hoped that they were in the suburbs of heaven! The common cry is, a very good man, a very honest man, a civil good natured neighbour; but a little too close, *Paulo attentior ad rem*, [rather too attentive to gain.] A small fault they think. But is idolatry and adultery a small fault? This the love of the world really is: one may as well bow down before a graven image, as love the world.

It is very observable that the commands of the Gospel are mostly calculated for regulating the affections of love, care, joy, grief; and

that it forbids and inveighs against the sins of the spirit; pride, malice, distrust, envy, covetousness, and the like.

The renovation of the will, and regulation of the affections, is the great work of regenerating grace. It is completely pharasaic to mind paying of tythes, and to neglect the love of God.

Say not, Oh say not, it is a small thing to love the world; but say, Oh how it defiles, how it exposes, how it damns; what idolatry, and adultery, and blasphemy is it! Arise, O my precious soul, sully not thy beautiful wings, by resting upon so filthy a dunghill, by preying upon so loathsome a carcass.

How evil and abominable the love of the world is, I shall have occasion to consider more particularly in some future meditation.

MEDITATION X.

Of the inconsistency of the Love of the World with the Love of God.

It seems to be the plain doctrine which the apostle teaches, That the love of the world and the love of God are inconsistent with each other. God and Mammon cannot agree. There is no serving two masters, especially if contrary the one to the other. *What communion hath light with darkness?* The reason of the incompatibility and inconsistency, seems to be laid in the opposition, *Contraria mutuo se pellunt*, [Contraries mutually repel each other.] The same fountain

cannot send forth sweet water and bitter. Here the reason seems to lie in the limited, straitened nature of the fountain. The narrow heart of man cannot contain two such guests at once. If the world has occupied the inn, the chambers of the soul, Christ must be cast into the stable. The same soul cannot at once send forth the sweet aromatic breathings of divine love, and the filthy noisome stench and exhalation of earthly love. How should such a limited agent perform two such contrary acts at the same time?

But what! May not a man love God well, and love the world too? No. No man loves God well but he that loves him best. He only loves him right that loves him with all his heart. There cannot be two bests. One cannot love God with all his heart, and the world with all his heart too.

But may not one love God best, and yet love the world? No. For if you love the world unduly, you do not love God best; and if you love God best, then your love of the world is not the undue love here forbidden.

The pure and conjugal love admits no rival; *Thalamus non patitur consortes*, [the marriage-chamber is sacred to the spouse.] There is an attempt, no doubt, to compound the matter, and to make a medley; and this medley, I fear, is the religion of most. It is too evident that they entertain the world chiefly; yet in good manners they would allow some room for God, some little room, upon a Sunday or an holy day, or perhaps at some other times, in some easy and cheap things. The harlot in the comedy was content

to entertain two; the one indeed she properly loved; but because the other gave her presents and good gifts, she was content that he should *Hærere in aliqua parte saltem apud eam*, [continue with her, at least under some condition,] some little corner of her house she would allow him too. It is as certain a sign of an unholy heart, to devote itself to two, as it was of a false mother to admit of the division of the child.

The world indeed has no title at all to the heart of man, and therefore modestly desires only a little part, an inferior love, a subordinate love. But together with this seeming modesty, the world is very cunning, for it knows that that part will very nearly bring in the whole; and that God will reject the whole if any part of it be withheld. But God has a right to all, and therefore demands all or none. He will not take up with a corner of the heart. The love of God fills the soul where it comes, as the light fills the firmament.

MEDITATION XI.

Of the evil of not loving God.

The love of the Father is not in him. Look about you, all you that love the world! Nay, rather let us all look into ourselves; let us fear and search lest we be found lovers of the world; for here is the most dreadful sentence that ever was pronounced; the blackest brand that can be put upon a rational being; such love not God. He

might as well have said, They hate him. For indeed (saving a little philosophical nicety) it amounts to the same thing. *He that is not for us is against us;* and yet more plainly, *The friendship of the world is enmity against God.*

Now if we consider that it is the most natural, necessary, reasonable, easy and excellent thing in the world to love God; and that it is the foundation of all other duties, it will better appear, how sad a character this is, *The love of the Father is not in him.* I will but glance upon some of these in this place, and reserve the rest to another.

MEDITATION XII.

The love of God is most natural.

It is most natural for man to love God. However it is true, too true, that, considering man in his state of apostacy, sin is most natural to him; yet if we consider man as a rational being only, abstracting him from his depravation, virtue, particularly the love of God, is most natural to him; and all sin, particularly worldly love, is unnatural and alien to him; which the Scripture plainly signifies, when it tells us so often of the defilements of sin. Now we know that which defiles, must needs be alien to that which it defiles.

To love God was the duty of man before the Gospel was given, yea or the law either; necessarily resulting from the relation between the creature and the Creator. It is most agreeable to the dictates of nature. Though it be so sad-

ly depraved, it has not quite put off its essence. For what are honour, and reverence, and adoration, but love exalted, love determined to a superior object? And this the heathens always thought just and equal to give to their gods.

It is as natural for the soul to cleave to something without itself, as for the ivy to cling to the oak. The soul naturally understands its own indigence, and therefore goes out to one thing or another to find rest; and though through her apostacy she is mistaken in her object, and fancies rest where it is not; which indeed is rather blasphemy than atheism; the love of a superior object, of a centre, is so natural that it cannot be separated from the very constitution of the soul. That centre must needs be some superior being, and more excellent than itself; and what can that be but God? Or what beside him can be said to be more excellent than the soul itself? God is remotely concerned in the pursuits even of the covetous and ambitious; howbeit they mean not so, and therefore their undesigned tendencies are no thanks to them; nor will ever make them happy.

To love the Lord our God with all our heart is the great commandment indeed; it is the law of nature inlaid in the very constitution of the soul, belonging to all men in all ages of the world.

MEDITATION XIII.

Of the easiness and pleasantness of loving.

To love is easy, cheap, and pleasant. It is easy, it requires no pains, it breaks no bones. Whatsoever curse lies upon all sublunary provisions, we may eat the heavenly manna without labour. Those devils, the heathen gods, required painful services indeed; sometimes Herculean labours. But the true God requires our love, he takes it as the most acceptable sacrifice; so acceptable, that it shall stand instead of all other duties, where they cannot be performed. He that is dumb and cannot pray, deaf and cannot hear, blind and cannot read, so poor that he cannot give, so close shut up that he may not receive, shall yet be well accepted of the Father, if he can love. Christ Jesus has a yoke indeed; but it is a yoke of government, not of punishment; it is not galling to the necks of his disciples, *My yoke is easy.* He has a burden too, but it is light; *Christi sarcina pennas habet.* [The burden of Christ has wings.]

To love is cheap, it costs nothing. Love indeed will grudge no cost, will stick at no charge if it be required; but there is none required to the exercise of love. This is the best way in the world for a poor man to be happy, (as we read the poor woman was, whose whole inventory amounted but to two mites,) and indeed a readier way for the rich, than though they should lavish gold out of the bag, and make oblations of

rams by thousands, and oil by rivers. For, what cares the self-sufficient God for these things. What doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul? *Deut.* x. 12.

To love is *pleasant.* The very acts of love are pleasant to him that exerts them. They had a dismal way of serving their gods anciently, in an extatic frantic manner, *cum sacro horrore*; [with a sacred horror,] as Baal's priests, cutting and slashing themselves; or as the priests of Apollo or Bacchus, swelling, raging and distracted. Lucan, I remember, somewhere in his Pharsalia describes the devotion that the Massilians paid to certain dreadful deities which they worshipped in a dark grove, so terribly, as would make one wish to get as far off from such deities as possible. Nay he tells us that the priest himself that went to atone them, was afraid of nothing more, than lest he should meet one of them, lest they should draw nigh to him in his drawing nigh to them. *Dominumq; timet deprendere luci.* [And dreads to meet the Genius of the grove.]

But love, divine love, the love of God, is serene, composed and sweet, pleasant in its very actings, ravishing the soul that exerts it; who takes just so much pains in loving, as the rivers do in running, the wind in blowing, or the sun in shining.

Good God! how infinitely and astonishingly kind and gracious art thou to the sons of men; all whose very commands consist with our ease, and are calculated for our pleasure! Lord, what can be more pleasant than to love, to love that

which is infinitely lovely! What can be safer, than to trust in Almighty Power! What easier, sweeter way of living, than to cast all our care and lay all our burden upon Infinite Wisdom and Goodness! What more sweet and cordial than to hope in Infinite Mercy and Veracity! These, Oh these sweet things are the matter of the law! And Oh thou that hast so mercifully accommodated thy laws to my pleasure, mercifully accommodated my soul to thy laws, that I may take pleasure in them.

MEDITATION XIV.

Of the excellency and necessity of the love of God.

The love of God is excellent and honourable; it puts a beauty and lustre upon the soul. This beautifies, dignifies, glorifies, yea, and in a sense, deifies the soul, uniting her to God, and so making her one with her Maker. As worldly love dishonours and defiles; as he that is joined to an harlot, is one with an harlot, even a limb of a harlot; and he that is joined to the world in spiritual adultery, is a limb of the world; so he that is joined to Christ is a member of Christ. The soul acts most nobly, exalts itself most bravely, when it spends its powers upon the supreme good. If there be any apotheosis of souls, this is it. The saints are the most excellent of the earth; and this is the character of saints, that they love God: *Love ye the Lord, all ye his saints.*

Of this I shall have occasion to enlarge in my meditations hereafter. I will therefore proceed

to think a little of the absolute necessity of the love of God.

The love of God is so *necessary* to the happiness of souls, that no soul can be happy that hath it not predominant in him. The precept makes it necessary, which commands it in both Testaments, and that over and over again, and that as the principal duty of man. It is a commandment, nay, it is a great, it is the *great* commandment, as our Saviour's words are translated, *Matt.* xxii. 38. Now after all these inculcations, can we imagine that God will dispense with this; nay, (with the leave of the Popish casuists be it spoken,) he cannot; for it is a necessary means of happiness. God himself cannot make a soul happy that hates him.

Considering the constitution of the rational soul, it is impossible that any thing should be his happiness below communion with God. Now there can be no communion, no converse without love. Can a soul dwell with him forever, and be happy in so doing, that does not love him? Ye hated me, and cast me out, says Jephthah. Certainly the haters of God do, in fact, cast themselves out of the presence of God.

MEDITATION XV.

Why called the love of the Father.

The love of the Father is not in him. But why the love of the *Father* rather than the love of *God*. This seems to be done on purpose, and to be

more elegant and emphatical, than if he had said the love of God. For it is a great aggravation of this unnatural sin, the love of the world. Father is an endearing relation, as appears by many texts, but methinks by no one more than that which proceeded from the mouth of Christ, and is now in the mouth of every Christian, *Our Father.*

God is fully our *Father*, yea, and *Mother* too ;* the words both of begetting and bringing forth, are ascribed to him; of him we are begotten and brought forth. Were it not monstrous, that a man should prefer his horse or his hounds, and the lives of them, before his Father; provide for them and let his father starve ? More monstrous it is to prefer the world before God. Moreover, the *Father* seems to be put elegantly in opposition to the world. As if one should say, What! love the world more than the Maker of it?

The moralist (I think it is Cicero) somewhere inveighs against the absurdity of those men, that adore images, and do not rather admire and reverence the skill that made them, and the ingenuity of the carvers and painters. God is the Father of the world (*the Father*, as well as *our Father*) *the Father of light*, the Maker of all that is pleasant, profitable, and honourable, the Creator of riches, the Fountain of pleasure and honour. So that to love the world rather than the Father, whether he be considered as our Father, or the Father of the world, is wicked and absurd.

* It is observable that the *Chinese* say of a good Emperor, " He is the father and mother of his people."
Ta-Hyoh.

MEDITATION XVI.

Of men's apprehensions concerning the love of God.

If any man love the world, &c. I foresee, that after all that I shall meditate upon this subject the issue will be, either that men will be secure and never mind this thundering expression, it wil not startle nor make any impression upon them; or they will a little open their eyes, and inquire into themselves, and ask, whether they be lovers of God or of the world.

I foresee the greatest part of men into whose hands these meditations shall fall, will be secure and unconcerned, as they are under the weightiest doctrines, and loudest thunders of God. It is the nature of worldly love to stupify, it drowns in perdition; It chokes the word; it makes men blind and bold; senseless and secure. It stifles, chokes, deadens, takes away all heart, and turns men into mere lumps of earth.

But perhaps there are others, some others, that will inquire. Well be it so; yet I suppose that the power of self-love is so great, that the inference they will make, will be one of these two. Either, Oh, I love God, and therefore am not a lover of the world; or, Oh, I am not a lover of the world; therefore I love God.

MEDITATION XVII.

What it is to love God.

But possibly there may be some ingenious inquirer, that with Philip, will ask and say, *Show us the Father, and it sufficeth.* To him Christ answered, *Have I been so long with you, and sayest thou, show us the Father?* As if he had said, the invisible God is seen in me; I am the image of the Father. So I say to these, God is invisible, but the image of God is visible in the world.

The image of God indeed is seen in the whole creation, and the power, wisdom, and goodness of God, are to be observed and admired therein.

But especially it is to be admired in man. Man is more especially the image of God; and if we say we love God, whom we have not seen, and love not our brethren whom we have seen, we deceive ourselves.

More especially it is to be observed in good men. Therefore is the love of God so often described by the love of the brethren, and of the saints.

But principally, True goodness is the nature of God. God is goodness, truth, love, holiness; and he that loveth the world more than these, is the idolater and adulterer here spoken of. If any man habitually, in his judgment or affections, prefer the pleasures, profits, or honours of the world, before righteousness, goodness, truth and holiness, he is dead, accursed.

I suspect that the love of Christ's person is mostly a notion amongst men. To follow his example, to imitate his graces, to copy out his perfections, is to love him. For although we have not heard God's voice, nor seen his shape at any time, yet if his word abide in us, we love him, *John* v. 37, 38.

He that loveth Christ must keep his commandments. If any man therefore prefer the world before the commands of Christ, before the favour of God, or the peace of his own conscience, so far he is a lover of the world. The son of the bond-woman, and of the free, cannot dwell together; fleshly wisdom, and the grace of God, cannot at the same time predominate. The love of God is a nature, not a rapture or ecstasy, much less a mechanical thing, acted only upon the stage of fancy.

MEDITATION XVIII.

Of the false love of God.

But what, is the love of the world so pestilent, so malignant, so poisonous, that no love of God will grow by it in the same soul?

Yes, there may be a great deal of spurious love; love of a false kind, more properly called flattery than friendship. Men may fancy they love God much, and may cry, God forbid but they should love him above all things. Perhaps there may be some true love in a weak degree; true, I mean, in opposition to dissembled, physically true. (For, why may there not be a true love,

that is not saving?) But he that loves God aright, as the supreme good, must needs love him with a supreme and superlative affection.

But be it true or not in a physical sense; that love of God is not highest, doth not prevail nor predominate, that is easily crushed, cast out, gainsaid. If the tares get above the corn and smother it; if the cares of the world choke the word, those tares and cares are predominant.

The men of Keilah made love to David, perhaps they had some real kindness for him; but their kindness for Saul was greater; so that if he offered himself, they would cast forth David and his men.

The love of God and the love of the world are inconsistent. And that appears from the nature of the objects, which are contrary the one to the other. As also from the nature of love. *If any man love the world*, must be understood of a predominant love; then *the love of the Father is not in him*, must be understood of a predominant love also. God being the chief good, the love of him must be the highest and strongest, or else it is not such as the object requires. If a woman love her husband well, yet if she love him not above any other man, she does not love with a right conjugal love, which ought to be stronger than all others. The proper and acceptable love of God must needs be predominant, otherwise it is not fitted to the nature of the supreme good. Now it is impossible there should be two predominant loves in the same soul at one and the same time.

MEDITATION XIX.

Of predominant Love.

But it will be asked, what constitutes a predominant love?

Love, yea, even the love of God, is capable of intension and remission. There are some that depart from their first love in a great measure. The spouse was one while sick of love, another while so lazy and languid, that she would not so much as arise to open to her beloved when he knocked. Particularly, as much as worldly love prevails, so much Divine love languisheth and is invalidated. They are like the houses of Saul and David; the rise of the one is the fall of the other, and they cannot be both supreme in one Israel. They are like a pair of scales in this; as the one rises, the other falls, but they differ in this, that they are never equally poised.

A predominant love must be intense in degree, habitual and durable.

The intenseness of the love of God is emphatically described, Luke x. 27. *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, with all thy strength, and with all thy mind.* How many *alls* are here? And yet if we had ten thousand times more powers and faculties, we ought to love God with them all too. It is an emphatical translation of that elegant text of the apostle, Rom. v. 5. *The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts;* which if I might paraphrase in Scripture style, I would call it a cover-

ing of the soul, as the waters cover the sea. The soul of a lover of God seems to itself too scant to comprehend the supreme good; wishes itself wider and larger. Oh that one would give me the large heart of an angel! Oh that God would fill all my capacities, and make me yet more capacious, Oh that he would take up all the room in me; and Oh that he would make for himself more room in my soul, than yet there is, to entertain him!

And certainly this predominant love may be discerned. If I know not what I love best, I know nothing. Why may I not as well know whether I love God or the world best, as I know whether I love bread or husks best? By what we constantly choose, when things come in competition, we may know what we love best.

But may not the palate of the mind be so altered or vitiated, (as well as that of the body,) that what I choose at one time, I may refuse at an other, and prefer its contrary? Yes certainly. In every single wilful, deliberate act of covetousness or impatience, worldly love does predominate *pro hic et nunc:* [in this special instance:] But it will not denominate the man a lover of the world, except it be habitual.

MEDITATION XX.

Of habitual Love.

The love that is so predominant, as to domineer, must be habitual. But may not an habitual lover of the world be converted into an habi-

tual lover of God? Yes, surely. This is the conversion of which the Gospel speaks. To turn men from idols to the acknowledgment of the true God is not a saving conversion. To turn them from the commission or love of some single sin of the flesh, as drunkenness, fornication, swearing, is a partial, but not a saving conversion. The great and saving conversion consists in changing the temper, the nature, and introducing divine habits. The habit of worldly love may be destroyed, and is destroyed in all sincere converts. The habit of divine love may be interrupted in its acts, weakened in its vigour, but shall not be quite destroyed. We read of some indeed that had left their love, (*Rev.* ii. 4.) But it does not appear that they had quite lost it; or if we will say that they had lost it, yet it was not it, but some degrees of it that they lost; not their love but their first love, or some degrees of that love which they had at first. I know not what should hinder, but that every truly regenerate and habitual lover of God, may make the same challenge as the apostle did, *What shall separate us from the love of God?* If it be said that the love of God towards his elect is immutable and indefectible, yet their's is not so towards him—One may well reply, that consequently the love of the elect is lasting, everlasting too. If it be true, that whom God loves he loves to the end, and that he loves none with this peculiar love, but those who love him, it will fairly follow, that their love is endless too.

MEDITATION XXI

Lovers of the world willing to be deceived.

And now methinks I see the secure world stand unconcerned; every one blessing himself, Oh I am not this accursed lover of the world. I do indeed now and then prefer the world, my gain, my pleasure, my reputation, before God, and the observation of the dictates of my own conscience, as I perceive all men do, but I do not make a constant custom of it; I have no habit of it.

But though it be but in one single act that thou preferrest the world before God, or in a sin committed now and then, yet glory not, account it not a light thing. It is something surely, and indeed enough to humble and amaze all men on earth, to be now and then guilty of such folly and filthiness, such blasphemy, unrighteousness and idolatry, as this is, to but be once guilty of preferring the devil before God.

But examine, Oh look inwardly. Do not these acts proceed from a habit, these sprouts from a root? We had need to search narrowly, and examine strictly; for if we be mistaken here, we are mistaken indeed, fatally, everlastingly mistaken.

The worldly mind generally denies and palliates its worldliness. Men are generally ashamed to be called worldly minded, and very loth to believe themselves to be such. Notwithstanding which, it is most certain that there are many

such; so that somewhere there will be found a deadly fatal mistake.

MEDITATION XXII.

The lovers of God most sensible of their worldliness.

On the other hand, the heavenly mind, the habitual lover of the Father is most sensible of, and complains most of his own worldliness.

Lord, how little do I discern this disease, or lay it to heart in myself? How little do I mourn over it in others, where it is apparently predominant, notwithstanding it is so deadly?

If I be not a predominant lover of the world, yet, alas! in how many single acts have I given preference to it, every one of which was horrible disloyalty and treachery!

Alas! How early, how earnestly, how eagerly, have I pursued the world in my thoughts, in a whole train of thoughts, from morning to evening! How unseasonably too has it put itself into my meditations, how boldly intruded into my devotions; how impenitently thrust in itself, to interrupt my communion with Heaven, with an excessive impudence and importunity!

Wo be to me, if thinking more, if speaking oftener of this world than of God, be a certain mark of a predominant lover of the world; who then could be saved! Yet when I consider, that where the treasure is, the heart will be also; and again, that out of the abundance of the heart

the mouth speaketh; how can I choose but be ashamed and afraid?

Lord, deliver me from levity of spirit, from earthliness of mind, from meanness of temper and conversation! Oh wind up my heart to heaven, let my converse be there and with thee! Employ my mind in contriving, my soul in exerting acts of love; fill my mouth with thy praises, and let holiness to the Lord be written upon all my actions and enjoyments.

Oh how are the mighty fallen, the high sunk down into a most mean and miserable condition! How is the gold become dim! How shamefully does the noble human nature *embrace a dunghill*, and the souls that came originally out of the blessed Creator's hands purer than snow, have contracted a visage blacker than a coal!

Good God, I believe; Oh help my unbelief! I love thee, Oh pardon my want, my weakness of love; and shed abroad thy love in, and quite over my dry and parched soul! Rather take from me whatever takes any part of my heart from thee, than that I should be a partial, an imperfect, an insincere lover of God!

MEDITATION XXIII.

Nothwithstanding men's self-deceptions, there are many lovers of the world.

And because no man will confess himself to be a lover of the world, are there therefore none such? Has the apostle supposed an impossibility

or a *non-entity*, when he says, *If any man love the world*, &c. or are men therefore not of the world, because they say they are not of the world? Whether it be meet to hearken unto God, and believe him, or man, let us now judge.

We may easily suppose man to be bribed and blinded in his own case. What the judgment of God is we shall soon discern in his word; by which we may briefly examine all the ages of the world.

The primitive state of man, no doubt, was a state of pure and divine love. As the Creator is said to take pleasure in the workmanship of his hands, so doubtless the rational creature delighted himself in his Creator; and in him only admired himself and the rest of the creation.

But this lasted not long. Alas, how soon did the worldly spirit begin to prevail! Cain, the heir of the world, chose the world for his portion; and the love of the Father was not in him. *For if a man love not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen!*

The old world neglected righteousness and the preacher of it. We read what their main study was; they were intent upon marrying, building, planting, and such like sensual entertainments, and chose that part, till they were taken away from it. If we consider the Antediluvian world, we shall find that it had but few men in it who were not worldly men. Next take a view of the world that followed the flood, and resolved that the flood should never follow them, I mean the builders of Babel, and the men of that age, the

sensual Nimrods, the rapacious giants, the idolatrous Canaanites, Amorites, Perizzites; and the rest of that race, and what can we find among them but worldliness, violence and uncleanness.

But there was another seed, and surely that was all holy; I mean the children of Abraham, the seed of Israel; no, it is too evident that all Israel were not Israelites indeed; witness the many hundred thousands that lusted after the flesh-pots, nay, the very onions and garlick of Egypt; that preferred their bondage before the promised land, and the free exercise of their religion.

Follow them into that land, and take notice of their great idolatry, and other iniquities committed frequently and almost generally, under the government of their judges. Nay, view them under the government of their best kings, and take an account from David's own mouth, and you will find that even then there were many, that said, *Who will show us any good?* or, in other words, the greater part craved worldly goods. Not long after, the Israelites become so bad, that the poor prophet thought that he was left the only worshipper of the Father.

In the days of the prophet Jeremiah, rich and poor, and all had so universally apostatized, that throughout the streets of Jerusalem, one good man was not to be found, Jer. 5.

In the days of the Son of man, the best sort of men (so reputed) were lovers of the world, more than of the Father; or, in our Saviour's own words, *They loved the praise of men, more than the praise of God*; they received honour one of another.

And how men stood affected in the following times, his followers will tell us; one apostle declaring, *That all men sought their own things;* and another complaining, *That the whole world lay in wickedness.*

And if the world be so amended in these later times, that none of this race are left, we shall need expect no new heavens, nor new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. But, alas! we are so far from that refinement, that we must still cry as they of old,

O curvæ in terras animæ, et cœlestium inanes!

[How are souls bent to the earth, and void of heavenly things!]

MEDITATION XXIV.

Who are the lovers of the world in general.

THERE are then, nay, there are many lovers of the world. But what Jehu will now appoint us a sacrifice for the worshippers of Baal (for they are concealed among the people) whereby we may discern them. Give them an invitation, an encouragement, lay a bait before them, and we shall find them out.

In general, it is certain, That in the matters of doing and suffering, there are multitudes to be found.

In doing, They that account any of the known commandments of God so heavy, ungrateful, and troublesome, that they wilfully refuse to do them,

are lovers of the world. The lovers of God do whatsoever things he commands them, (*John* xv. 14.) they follow the lamb, let him lead them whither he will. Abraham, that friend of God, is famed for his cheerful obedience in hard and grievous things; as in forsaking his own land, to go he knew not whither, and in sacrificing his beloved Isaac. Oh severe command! but Oh angelical obedience! To the lovers of God, his commands are not grievous. Paul, whom the love of Christ constrained, was ready to do any thing, to take any pains, for the name of Jesus, and the honour of it.

In case of suffering, They that will not quit all worldly interests, rather than disown Christ, or wilfully and deliberately violate a known commandment, are lovers of the world more than of God.

Sufferings try men. If ye seek me, if ye cleave to me, saith God, let these things go, leave your hold of the world, quit your worldly interest. This is so frequently inculcated in the Gospel, that it seems needless to bring any particular proof. A glance at those famous general texts is enough. If any man take not up his cross, he cannot be my disciple. If any man will not deny father and mother, house and lands for my sake, he is not worthy of me. If a man will not cut off his right hand, and pluck out his right eye for Christ, he is not a lover of him.

MEDITATION XXV.

Of the lovers of the world more particularly.

But because *dolus latet in universalibus*, [deceit lies in generals,] I will consider more particularly, that if possible, some one or other may be convicted.

If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

I will consider the world in a physical, and in a theological sense; man in a moral and political capacity; and God under those notions in the 17th meditation.

Consider the world in a physical sense, and it is certain, that whosoever loves, admires, enjoys the world, and the beauties thereof, in a way of opposition to God, or competition with him, or indeed separation from him, is not a right lover of the Father.

However beautiful the fabric of the world is, we ought not to love it in opposition to God, nor esteem the creature in a way of derogation from the Creator. It is true, a man may (with Jannes and Jambres) say, *Digitus Dei est hic*, [This is the finger of God,] and seem to own the goodness and power of God in the Creation, and yet be a mere Egyptian. But yet no true Israelite will say, *Digitus Dei non est hic*; [This is not the finger of God;] no lover of the Father, will exalt the power of natural causes so, as to exclude the author of them. It becomes a Royal

Society to admire the King of Heaven;* and if any man study and admire the world in opposition to God, he is an atheistical lover of the world.

He that loves the world, or values it in competition with God, is (at least) a false friend of God; and acts, as if he would set the creature at variance with the Creator.

Yea, he that loves the creature in a way of distinction or separation from God, is, in a degree, unspiritual, and in some sort of bondage.

Men are commonly proud of much knowledge; but the apostle speaks of some that are proud, and yet know nothing, (1 *Tim.* vi. 4.) So were those philosophers that knew not God in the world, nor apprehended the invisible things of him, by those works of his, of which they took so much notice.

MEDITATION XXVI.

Of the ordinate Love of Life.

Considering the world physically, I mus ta little meditate upon natural life, as a physical good. I need not employ my thoughts about the lawfulness of a subordinate love of life, a doctrine easily entertained, without the assistance of any arguments or motives; but I will here meditate upon these three following positions.

1*st*, If any man love this natural life more

* Alluding happily to the foundation of the Royal Society of Great Britain, in 1662.

than truth and righteousness, that he would rather choose to live sinfully, than not to live, he is a predominant lover of the world.

2*dly*, If a man be not willing to lay down his life at the will of God, he is a lover of the world.

3*dly*, If any man be content to spend his eternity in this world, though it were a sinless state, but imperfect, he is not arrived at that degree of divine love after which it becomes us to aspire.

Concerning the *first* of these: It must be confessed, that the devil wisely conjectured, that Job, as good as he was, would quit his integrity, at least to save his life; go about to take that from him, and he would quit that patience and submission that he had showed in his other losses. And, Oh God, how many have quitted their integrity, to save their lives! How many have prostituted their bodies in acts of adultery, their souls in acts of idolatry, to preserve the union betwixt soul and body! How many cowardly soldiers of Christ, to save their lives, have surrendered their colours, forsaken their profession, renounced the truth! It is said that the papists, in the Irish Rebellion, made some renounce the truth, to save their lives, and then killed them. A complete murder indeed, to kill soul and body at once. How many have denied the Lord that bought them, blasphemed, said even to sin itself, *Make me as one of thy hired servants, put me to any drudgery whatsoever, so I may but eat bread and live.* These are they that *find* their lives in the *loss* of their souls, but they shall lose them. Alas! there are too many that will commit any sin, as well as undergo any slavery, to live. Many

Jebusites, that to save their lives, suffer (at least) one of their eyes to be put out; I mean, embrace idolatry in a blind obedience.

And is life so sweet, as to be preferred before truth, righteousness, and holiness? So sweet, as to be preferred before God, the uncreated life? It is indeed the highest temptation, as the devil too truly intimated; and they are more excusable that sin to preserve life, than they that sin to maintain honour or estate; but yet inexcusable too. The Church would not do so, Ps. lvi. 17. *All this is come upon us, yet have we not forgotten thee, nor dealt falsely in thy covenant.*

But did not Peter, to save his life, deny his Lord? Yes, and Peter was in that act a predominant lover of the world. We know how dear it cost him. And if any man will encourage himself by his example, let him be sure of Peter's repentance, before he venture as he did. Many have denied their Lord, and never owned him more; have so run away, as never to return or look back; and that by a just judgment of God, who thereupon gives men up to believe lies; and commonly the next thing is, to find out ways to justify and defend their sin.

To prefer life before truth under any temptation, is a single act of worldly love; but being convinced of the sin, and yet to live in it, only to preserve the life so stolen, denominates an habitual lover of the world. Peter saved his life, by abjuring his Lord; but he did not maintain it so. Yea, some have given back their lives so feloniously obtained to the flames; have sought out the executioner, have voluntarily offered up their

lives, as being unwilling to keep them upon such base terms.

All that use unjust means to preserve life, and allow themselves in the use of such means, are predominant lovers of the world.

Lord, let me hate that life, that must be purchashed at so dear a rate, as Divine displeasure!

The kings of Israel, one consulting the God of Ekron, the other the witch of Endor, are recorded for wicked men, and were sadly rewarded too; both lost their lives, seeking unduly to preserve them; so true is that saying of Christ, in more senses than one, *He that findeth his life, shall lose it.*

Many things may be quitted to preserve life. Whether Abraham told a lie or not to save his life, or David sinned in denying his reason, before the king of Gath, or the Hebrew midwives lied to save the lives of the infants, is doubtful; much may be said to exculpate them all. But that a man may with Abraham, deny himself the conversation of his wife for a time; forsake his country with David, yea, though the house of God were there; that he may in some degree disguise himself; that he may use some pretences and excuses; is evident from the example of Samuel, when he went to anoint David; and Jeremiah, when he discoursed with the king about rendering up the city to the Chaldeans. It is evident, that men may part with their estates to save their lives, as when in danger of shipwreck; or with some part of their liberty, as Christ quitted his opportunity of teaching the people for a time; that they may with Moses, forsake their country,

and their father's house. But it will in no case become lawful, to quit one's integrity for the preservation of life; to prefer life, before virtue; and so, *Propter vitam vivendi perdere causas*, [for the sake of life to destroy the means of living.] Lord, mortify this love, this inordinate love of life, which puts us upon so many sinful methods to maintain it, and let us love life only in thee!

MEDITATION XXVII.

Of unwillingness to die.

2dly, If any man be not willing to lay down his life at the will of God, he is a lover of the world.

The will of God is just, righteous, pure, perfect, and more desirable than life itself. The will of God is God himself, and he that resisteth, or opposeth, or is not cheerfully subject to the will of God, whether his preceptive or disposing will, is a rebel.

Alas! How little conscience do men ordinarily make of inward, hearty submission to the will of God! They are always reckoning these murmurings and discontents, and acts of self-will, among human infirmities, at worst; but such as they desire not to be cured of. God says, *Come away;* the selfish worldly nature cries, *I will not come; or, I will tarry yet a while longer.* And what is rebellion, if this be not? It cannot be, but that God takes ill all that reluctancy and unwillingness that is found in us, as he did in Lot, and especially Lot's wife.

Remember her, O my soul, whenever thou offerest fondly to look after worldly things, in any way of reluctancy against the will of God!

But it will be said, Have not good men been unwilling to die, when they have known it to be the will of God to remove them? was not Hezekiah loth to die when he had a message sent him from Heaven, *Set thine house in order, for thou shalt die?*

To this I reply, if good men have been guilty of this unwillingness and non-compliance, it is no part of their goodness. Good men are never the better for many things that are recorded of them in Scripture; yea, at the best, certainly, it is an imperfection to be loth to die; and if it be no worse, I am sure a wise man will not be proud of it, nor a good man pleased with it.

The best and most perfect saints have been usually willing to die. There was no more necessary to be said to Aaron, but, *Go up into this mountain, and put off thy clothes, and die there; and he went up and undressed himself, and died.* No more was said to Moses, but, *Go up into this mountain, and see the land of Canaan, and die; and he went up and saw, and died.* If I should here dwell, and take a view of the way in which the saints entertain death, I should find that all of them entertained the summons of death contentedly, many cheerfully; and some not so much cheerfully as greedily; only Hezekiah desired to live a little longer, to see the kingdom settled, and (as it appears) to see an heir of the crown; and it must be made an example to encourage lingering, and lothness to die. It is true he prayed to

live, but whether he was absolutely unwilling to die or not, or whether he resisted the will of God, I dare not determine, nor can any one prove. For even Christ himself prayed, *That the cup might pass from him:* yet with submission of his will, *Not my will, but thy will be done.*

MEDITATION XXVIII.

Of not longing after a better Life.

3*dly.* If any man be content to spend his eternity in this world, in this imperfect state, though it were supposed to be sinless, he hath not arrived at that degree of divine love, after which it becomes every Christian to aspire.

If the prodigal soul do truly repent, if he do see there is a dearth in the whole creation, an insufficiency in the world to entertain him, he will resolve to return to his father's house. And he that could be content forever to dwell in a strange land, and take up with the husks that are there, declares himself a stranger to the bread of his father's house.

It may be, some one will doubt, and ask, Whether there be any man so fond of life, as to wish to live eternally in this body?

To which I answer, That men plainly see and know that they cannot, they must not spend their eternity here, and therefore will not confess they desire any such thing, accounting it a shame to be thought to be fond of a thing impossible.

But yet really many men wish it might be so, as having no view, belief, or hope of a better state. The extremities of old age indeed do force men to wish for death, who yet have no mind to die; but if any worldly man could live in health, peace, and youthful vigour, it is not to be doubted but that he would be well content to live here always. The poets make themselves sport with one Tithonus, who wished for immortality in this world; and it was granted him, that he should never die. But he had forgot to put in this, that he should not grow old neither; so that when he was extremely grown with old age, and good for nothing, he would fain have died, but could not. But if God would add indefectibility of wealth, health, and strength, to immortality, no doubt but that every worldly man would put up Tithonus's prayer.

And indeed, wishing to live another day, and yet another, and then another, is a kind of wishing to live eternally here.

He is strangely forgetful of himself, and his true interest, unkind to his own soul, who does not breathe after a state of perfection to come. And he that does so aright, will be growing up into it here. He that rightly desires heaven, would not willingly wait for all of it till the world to come. That which the poet accounted vicious in the sons of men, is virtuous and laudable in the sons of God, even in this present life, to lay hold upon eternal life.

What then, must men leap out of the body? No, but live above the body, grow up into a God-

like nature, into a resemblance of Christ Jesus, which is heaven.

Whilst we live in this body we cannot be happy, by reason of our senses, fancies, appetites; we must therefore desire a better body, if we study our own felicity. Yea, suppose the best; that we could live without sin, yet all this while we are but of a low form, we are capable of more excellent accomplishments. It becomes a truly generous mind to aspire after perfection, after a complete rest in its centre, after the fullest enjoyment of the supreme good.

And what meanest thou, O my soul, to cling so close to this foreign, this unsuitable relation! is there any thing more to be enjoyed here? Are there any more children in this barren womb of the world? And what meanest thou, O my lazy soul, that thou flaggest in thy motions, art content with thy attainments, that thou art continually feeding upon the creature, upon husks, and dost not mind thy journey! What an ass was Issachar, who saw that the land was pleasant, and bowed down his shoulder to bear, and became servant to tribute! What a fool art thou to fancy any rest here, and couch down so tamely under thy burden! They knew not what they said, who cried, It is good for us to be here. Consider what that here was, and that they had more temptation to be there, in that mount, than thou hast to be in this vale of tears. Surely thou knowest not what thou doest, who sittest down contented to be here.

MEDITATION XXIX.

Of desiring to be dissolved.

But is it possible that any man should desire to die?

Absolutely to desire dissolution, philosophers will not allow; but all divines will allow a desire of perfection, to be with Christ, and fully to enjoy the supreme good. Now this (I think) supposes a quitting of this life, and a putting off this body.

This thirst after holiness and happiness, is often made a characteristic of the lovers of God, and of his Son, Jesus. Christ desired, that where he was, his followers might be also; and why should not his followers be as kind to themselves?

If we view those texts seriously, which describe the lovers of God, we shall find this constantly to be their character, That they love the appearance of Christ Jesus; and that they wait for the mercy of Jesus Christ unto eternal life.

But is it not a sin, to be discontented at our stay in this world?

To be discontented at the will of God, must be evil; for true happiness consists in conformity of will to the will of God. But to long after rest, and that in God, cannot be interpreted to be an intemperate act.

It is an act of faith and patience to be content to live. To desire death out of weariness of afflictions, and of the discipline of God, is weak, and

cowardly. But to be weary of our distance, absence, imperfect state, and to long after perfection, and daily to grow up into it, is safe, good, proper, generous, and commendable.

O God, loosen my heart; break the league, I pray, if I may not pray that thou wouldst break the bonds! If I may not leap out of the body, make me very desirous to go out when the way is open. If my captive soul may not break prison, and free itself, yet make it willing to go out, when the great Redeemer shall open the prison doors, and say to the captive, Go forth. Is it not enough, O my soul, to have the prison doors set open; but wilt thou say also, Nay, but let them come themselves and fetch me out? What entertainment findest thou in husks, that thou art so unmindful of the bread of life? What an unseemly thing is it to be dragged home; to hide thyself (with Saul) amongst the stuff, when thou art sought for to be crowned.

Lord! that I could wait for thee, more than they that wait for the morning; more than the servant desireth the shadow, or the hireling looketh for the reward of his work! Oh that I might never think myself well, but when I am sick, sick of love.

MEDITATION XXX.

Of the profits of the world.

Now I will consider the world in a theological sense, and thus it denotes any thing that has op-

position to God. And so we read of the spirit of the world, the wisdom of the world, the men of the world, the fashions of the world, the sorrow of the world, &c. The world in general is, whatsoever is not God; and so even self may be called the world.

Whosoever loveth any thing, or cleaves to it more than to God, or habitually prefers it before him, is a lover of the world.

But I will view more particularly, what the Scripture comprehends under the notion of the world, in a theological sense.

And here I shall begin with the profits of the world, the riches and treasures of it; which have almost engrossed the name of the world, as being a principal part of it, to which the generality of men are addicted.

This I take especially to be meant by *mammon*, which one cannot serve in consistency with God. Whosoever prefers the profits and riches of the world before God, the same is a lover of the world.

To speak my judgment freely, I think there are many things more valuable than silver and gold. Learning and valour are better; all the ornaments and accomplishments of the mind are better than they; friends are better; health and peace are better.

It is a wonder to me, that men should lose their peace, forfeit their friends, expose their health for these things. Although (I confess) it is not idolatry, because these things are not God; yet it is absurd, unseemly, and disingenuous, to

prefer riches before these things, because these are really better.

To say I had rather be a prince than a philosopher, is proof of a low mind.

But to value these riches more than God, more than truth, goodness, and purity, makes an idolatrous lover of the world. To seek these more than the kingdom of God, to hunger after them more than after righteousness, to confide in them more than in the promise and providence of God, doth denominate the accursed person here spoken of.

MEDITATION XXXI.

Of stealing.

Under this head, of the love of the profits of the world, come to be condemned, injustice, worldly confidence, covetousness, carefulness, discontentedness, and uncharitableness, and the several branches of these.

I begin with injustice. They are all unjust, who either use undue means, or due means in an undue manner, to get worldly advantage, and therein are lovers of the world, more than of God.

The first sort of injustice is in the use of undue means. And so stealing, defrauding, lying, oppressing, bribery, are a preferring the world before righteousness, truth, and mercy; and consequently denominate a lover of the world more than of God.

According to this method, I must begin with stealing. God is righteous; the righteous Lord loveth righteousness; whosoever therefore loves it not, loves not him; whosoever steals, prefers the world before righteousness, and consequently does not love it.

Stealing is a violation of property. Let property be what it will in its own nature, be it not a sacred thing, be it a necessary evil, be it a good not simply necessary; yet it is now necessary, as things are with mankind It cannot well be denied, that theft supposes property, and property supposes apostacy. If man had continued in his primitive state, it is likely the earth would have been as free to his innocent offspring as the air is at this day. At first, there was no enclosure but of one single tree; neither shall there be any in the world to come, though we should grant the doctrine of the saints reigning upon earth

In utmost extremity, to violate property for the preservation of life, is no theft, or at least that theft is no sin; yea it becomes a duty. For no man can be necessarily placed between two evils. The one of them will be a duty.

Since the fall of man, property is necessary to avoid that confusion, which the lusts of men would introduce; yet perhaps it is not so determinate and severe as some men imagine. The poor have an interest in the estates of the rich; they have a part; which yet these ought to give; not the other to take. If they do not give it, they are the thieves. For detaining a right is theft, as well as taking any thing away wrongfully. I cannot deny but that every thief is cov-

etous, but I do also affirm, that every covetous man is a thief.

If we could suppose the sons of men free from all self-interest, and worldly love, there would be no need of property; neither would there be any poor; for there is enough in the world to serve all men that live in it, if they would be content with a due way of living. But God having (it may be for the hardness of men's hearts) established property, and national laws having determined it; to steal is to prefer the world before righteousness and order; whether poor men steal bread, or great men steal kingdoms.

Lord, grant, that I may never reckon myself to have any more, than the use of things, lest I rob thee, (for in truth, thine is the property,) nor ever deny so much of these things as I can spare, to them that stand in need of them, lest I rob the poor; from whom to withhold, is as thievish as to take away!

MEDITATION XXXII.

Of defrauding.

Defrauding is a deceiving, either by words or actions; and both these are either *good* or *bad.*

There is a *pious* fraud; whether that of which the papists talk so much, be it or not, I doubt; whether that of Jehu were such, I know not. There is enough in both of them to make them *frauds;* but whether there be enough in either to make them pious, I cannot tell.

But St. Paul being wise, caught the Corinthians with guile, 2 *Cor.* xii. 16. This was doubtless pious *fraud.** This always designs the glory of God, and the good of the person deceived, and does not use ill means to accomplish the end; which indeed a man cannot do, and design the glory of God; for the glorifying of God, is our conformity to his will and laws.

I have always doubted whether Jacob's deceiving of his brother Esau, in the matter of the blessing, were pious or not; however, since the Scripture passes it over in silence, so will I.

Bad frauds also are either in words or actions. And so they are committed in representing things otherwise than they are, whereby ourselves are advantaged and another is injured; in extravagant commendations, undue disparagements, in false reckonings, false weights and measures. Yea, if the buyer for self-advantage, undervalue a commodity, crying, it is naught, it is naught, as far as in him lies, he defrauds the seller; as well as the seller out of covetousness, magnifying a thing that he knows to be naught, either cheats, or proclaims that he would cheat the buyer if he could.

The fraud of the Gibeonites brought a perpetual bondage upon them, though (except what direct lies there might be in it) I cannot see much of an impious fraud in them; no more than the greatest part of nominal Christians would adventure upon, if they were in the same circum-

* With respect to 2 *Cor.* xii. 16. the apostle only repeats the charge made against him. This text is, therefore, improperly alleged to justify cunning. See Dr. Macknight.

stances, and were sure of the same success. And it is plain that men in war, use stratagems to deceive their enemies, and are blameless; yea, I remember some instances of this in Scripture, approved by the Lord of hosts; although for my own part, without a revelation, I would judge simplicity and Godly sincerity to be the best policy.

Impious defrauding is, in some sense, worse than stealing; at least in this, that it offers a greater abuse to my brother. If I steal from my neighbour, I offend against his will; but if I cheat or deceive him, I abuse his understanding; wherefore most men had rather a hen were stolen from them, than be cheated of an egg; and it commonly grates more upon men to be accounted *fools*, than *knaves*.

And certainly the imposing upon a man's understanding, and that to his hurt, and my own gain, is very disingenuous. If he that *calls* his brother *fool*, be in so much danger; what of him, that *makes* him so? Every man that defrauds, imposes upon his brother's understanding, and makes his brother a fool. If Moses had indeed put out the eyes of the twelve tribes, as some of them falsely insinuated, and had made himself altogether a prince over them, he had better justified their murmurings against him, than any of those things did, that they objected against him;

MEDITATION XXXIII.

Of lying for worldly advantage.

Although it should not prove successful, and that thereby men do happen not to deceive; yet to lie, with a respect to worldly gain, is a predominant love of the world; for it is a preferring of the profits of the world before truth, and God is truth.

They that maintain any known erroneous opinion or practice, only to maintain a party, a name, an interest in the world, are liars, and lovers of the world. Truth ought to be dearer to us than our lives, much more than liberty, estimation, or interest. And Oh! would to God, that some of the greatest pretenders to religion, one way or another, would thoroughly examine themselves here! I am very jealous, that many palpable errors are defended, and many plain truths are dissembled and concealed; or at least many doubtful things imposed for truth, merely in favour of worldly interest, and that by many that carry their heads very high, and that to very pernicious consequences.

It is confessed indeed, that all truth is not so weighty, as to be professed to the loss of life; but all truth is so specious, (as much as St. Paul's cloke, and parchments that he left at Troas) as not to be denied; no, not for the preservation of life.

MEDITATION XXXIV.

Of oppression.

THERE are two things especially that hurt the wise, and spoil their wisdom, oppression and bribes put together, *Eccl.* vii. 7. Oppression makes men mad, and impatient, fretful, and so to depart from their wisdom. Gifts blind their eyes, and make them foolish in acting; these must needs therefore be great evils. It is strange, that giving should do men as much mischief as taking away; and yet so it is, both alike spoil men's wisdom.

The very threatening of oppression made ten tribes in twelve so mad, that they turned rebels, and made a defection from Rehoboam.

This oppression is properly found in the rich, such as kings and law-givers. The law is so far from excusing oppression, that the greatest oppression in the world is done by law. The greatest oppression that ever was committed in the sight of the sun, (nay indeed the sun hid his face, as being ashamed to see it,) was justified by a law; *We have a law, and by our law he ought to die*, John xix. 7. And we do elsewhere read of great oppressors, that framed mischief by a law, *Ps.* xciv. 20. Landlords oppress in rents; masters in work; yea, any man may oppress, that has but so much as an horse to ride on, in preferring worldly advantage before righteousness and mercy.

A man may be an oppressor, in an undue, severe, cruel exaction of that which is his own.

The servant in the Gospel that cast his fellow-servant into prison, who was willing to pay, but at present could not, *Matt.* xviii. 29. was a notorious oppressor. And indeed, the most monstrous oppression of all, is when the poor oppresseth the poor; they who feel the burden themselves, and consequently should pity others; they who are not able to make restitution, as soon as the rich can.

It is one of Solomon's aphorisms, *He that oppresseth the poor reproacheth his Maker;* that is, either God who made him after his own image, or God who made him poor; for even poverty itself may be called the gift of God, μακάρων δόσις αἰὲν ἐόντων, [a bestowment of the happy beings who live forever,] as the heathens could acknowledge. As if he should say, Shall he be reproached or wronged, whom the master of the family has employed in the meanest offices of the family? It is not the servant's fault that he is so mean; if any man reproaches, he reproaches not so much him, as his master. The foot cannot help it, that it is not the head. Most men are poor of God's making; but if any make themselves poor, it is not for any man to oppress them, nor for every man to reproach them neither; for reproach is a sort of punishment, which every man may not inflict.

There are several sorts of oppression; in goods, in money, (as they that detain the hire of the labourer,) in racking of rents, in selling, (making men pay the more for their necessity,) in rights, in liberty, &c. some of which I shall have occasion to meditate upon hereafter, and therefore will dismiss them at present.

MEDITATION XXXV.

Of Bribery.

They that take gifts to pervert justice, or favour any cause in judgment, are lovers of the world; for they prefer it before truth and righteousness. I do not think that every present is a bribe; but I think, it is safest for a minister of justice not to take gifts at all, lest he should be corrupted.

There is certainly a wonderful power in gifts, to blind the eyes even of the wise, Exod. xxiii. 8. *Every man* (saith the wise man) *is a friend to him that giveth gifts;* which argues the great interest that worldly profit hath in the heart of man; and consequently, how hard and noble a thing it is to be purged of worldly love.

Giving is indeed noble; *Beatius est dare, quam accipere;* [It is more blessed to give than to receive.] Giving to the poor is a god-like act; but either to give or receive gifts for the perverting of justice, is abominable.

Bribery, in this respect, is generally a greater sin than stealing; in that stealing is mostly committed by men that have need, and bribery, commonly, by them that have none. The lesser the temptation, the greater the sin.

Bribery may be committed in many things besides money; the bottle and the bag do speak as corrupt language, as the purse.

And there are many kinds of indirect bribery *per alium*, [by another,] as bad as that which is direct and *per se*, [by one's self.]

There is a kind of bribery in ecclesiastics, that seek after popular acceptance; and chaplains that preach pleasing things, or stifle doctrines that they know will be unpleasing (however edifying) to gain preferment; which, if the law would allow the exposition, might, perhaps, more properly, be called simony, than bribery.

Yea, there is a strange kind of blasphemous bribery that men use towards God. I suspect the greatest part of worship in the world is intentional bribery. Some go about to bribe God with their prayers and fastings, and forms of devotion, some with their alms and acts of charity; as they of old did with their oblations and sacrifices, of whom the satyrist speaks wittily:

Illorum lachrymæ mentitaque munera præstant
Ut veniam culpis non abnuat, ansere magno
Scilicet et tenui popano corruptus Osiris.

[With tears and insincere presents they seek indulgence for their faults, and Osiris is bribed by the offered goose and cake.]

Nay, it is to be feared, that however precious a doctrine faith is, there are many, that under the notion of believing, do indeed go about to bribe the justice of God with the righteousness of Christ; as indeed all those do, who lay great stress upon the righteousness of Christ, and themselves take no care to be righteous. Although our apostle hath so plainly told us, *That he that worketh righteousness is righteous.*

There is also a great deal of political bribery in the world; when counsellors, senators, or oth-

er trustees, betray that sacred thing, their trust, for money, or money's worth. Perhaps some of this will be appropriate, when I come to consider man in his political capacity; if it should not, I know it is easy for any man to enlarge upon it in his own meditations.

MEDITATION XXXVI.

Of those that offend in the undue degree of seeking riches.

Under the notion of unjust, are comprehended not only those that use *undue means*, but also they that use due means in an *undue manner*, to get worldly riches; and these are equally lovers of the world.

These are of two sorts; either such as offend in the *degree*, or such as offend in the *season* of seeking the world.

They offend in the degree, who although they follow merchandize or trades in themselves lawful, yet pursue them so ardently, so eagerly, with so much intenseness of mind, (which is an excess of diligence, as idleness is a defect of it) that they plainly appear to make the world their ἔργον, [first object,] and other things their παέργον, [secondary object,] the world their God, and the things of God a by-business. They invert our Saviour's divine counsel, and seek first the world, (which is the *alia* [other things] spoken of in *Matt.* xi. or rather *aliena* [another's things] to the soul) but about the kingdom of God and his

righteousness, they are very indifferent. They work out their livelihoods with more fear and trembling, than their salvation; give all diligence to make their callings and the effects of them sure, but little or none to make their calling and election sure. They seek and grasp the world with great eagerness; they rise up early, sit up late, eat their bread in carefulness, waste their strength, spend their age in toil and sorrow, perhaps shorten their days with immoderate labour, and will be found at last to be *felo de se.* [Self-murderers.] For a man may be a murderer as well by employing his hands too violently for himself, as by laying violent hands upon himself. They are resolved to secure their worldly interest; but they will trust God with their souls, as if they hoped those would fare well enough of course. To trust God with our souls is good; but to pretend to do it, and in the mean time to neglect them ourselves, is a profane kind of faith; men do not thus trust him with their bodies, or estates. The faith that rightly trusts, does also love, and work, and work by love.

MEDITATION XXXVII.

Of those that offend in the undue season of seeking the world.

They offend in the season of seeking the world, who follow their worldly employments in any season that ought to be devoted to the service of God by his special command.

Concerning the special season of prayer, we have nothing certain that I know of, though it is most proper and becoming to begin every day with God; most reasonable that the devout ejaculation of thanksgiving or supplication, should take place of worldly cares and contrivances, and should keep house in the soul at night, when they are all dismissed. A dog is a man's servant, which he turns out of doors at night, when he takes his children to bed with him; the dog may not enter in the morning without leave, till the door be opened for him; whereas the children get up, and come into the house when they please.

We do indeed read of the hour of prayer, but it is hard to say, which hour it was; or if we could, Where is the divine authority, the stamp of God for the observation of it?

But the Lord's day is certain, known and commanded to be observed. They that then ordinarily prefer the management of worldly business, before the worship of God, appear to be lovers of the world.

I know we must allow here for the works of necessity and mercy; these are to take place of the Sabbath. The preservation of life, though it be but of a beast, is an act of mercy, which God himself prefers before sacrifice; and so did the Lord of the Sabbath, by his example, teach us to do.

A physician is excusable in travelling to relieve his patient, if it be, in the sight of God, rather in merciful care, than worldly covetousness. But if the expectation and desire of a fee be most predominant, it is in vain to pretend necessity; God

shall find it out; before him it will bear them out but badly, to plead, The law allowed it.

But who shall excuse the lawyers, and other men that travel journies upon ordinary occasions, and upon business of light moment, and violate the Lord's day to save a little money, or a little labour, or for more convenient dispatch of worldly business?

To contrive to take a sermon in their way, to be at church at such a place by such an hour, I suspect will not mend the matter before a jealous God. Christ says, *Ye cannot serve God and mammon:* But these ingenious worldlings have found out a way to do it. They can travel a good day's journey, of twenty or thirty miles perhaps, and yet contrive to be at some church twice the same day. Then they say to God, Lo there is that which is thine; the rest is my own. Why may I not make the best use of it? Thus they divide the day betwixt God and the world. But whether he that requires a whole day for his service, will accept such partnership, *viderint illi*, it is good to consider well of it.

MEDITATION XXXVIII.

Of worldly confidence.

After injustice, comes worldly confidence to be condemned. Trust and confidence is a part of worship; worldly confidence therefore is idolatry. Yea, it is blasphemy to rest in and upon

the creature, since God alone is the rest of souls, and the confidence of the ends of the earth.

To confide in the duration of riches, is a piece of folly, because they are winged, and so uncertain; *Thou fool, this night*, &c. But this is not the folly that I mean.

To trust in riches, to repose one's self upon them, therefore to account ourselves happy or safe because we have them, to rejoice mainly in them, crying, *Be merry, thou hast goods laid up for many years*: This is the worldly confidence that God has so often condemned and forbidden. *God shall destroy thee for ever*, says the psalmist, (Ps. 52.) *The righteous shall laugh at him*, (saying,) *Lo this is the man that made not God his strength, but trusted in the abundance of his riches!*

Job reckons it amongst the greatest of sins, to say to gold, Thou art my hope; or to the fine gold, Thou art my confidence, Job xxxi. 24.

Those that trust in riches, shall not be profited by them; either to bribe the enemy, who shall despise their silver and gold, as the prophet speaks; or to purchase health in time of sickness; strength and swiftness shall not avail; God will baffle these, by making the enemy swifter and stronger to pursue. *Ye said, we will ride upon the swift; therefore shalt they that pursue you be swift*, Isa. xxx. 16.

Charge them that are rich in this world, that they do not trust in uncertain riches, says the apostle. Lord what a strange thing is man! He must not only be admonished, but charged. Why, what's the matter? That he do not trust in rich-

es, uncertain riches. Why, if they be uncertain, there is no danger of trusting in them. Yes, they are uncertain, and he knows it, yet he must be charged not to trust in them.

It were endless to give an account both from sacred and profane history of the disappointments of those that have relied upon, and thought themselves safe in their temporal prosperity and worldly riches; or of the princes of the earth, that have been miserably deceived with the number and strength of men, horses and ships, wherein they have confided, more than in the Lord of hosts.

MEDITATION XXXIX.

Περὶ ἐπιθυμίας, *or, of covetousness.*

I will now consider of covetousness, which is an undue desire of worldly wealth. This desire is undue, by the kind of the wealth, or by the degree of the desire: And so we are covetous, either when we lust after that which is another man's; or intemperately desire worldly wealth of our own, though we use no indirect means to obtain it.

The first of these, is that covetousness directly aimed at in the tenth commandment, called in Greek ἐπιθυμία; and it is a sort of invading of another man's right.

There is a good covetousness, a coveting earnestly the best gifts; but this is improperly called covetousness. For to speak properly, we are

not to covet the gifts and graces that are in other men, although in themselves they are desirable, yet as they are other men's, they are not the object of our desires. There may be a bad desire of a good thing.

Evil covetousness is of earthly things, and it supposes an impotent and worldly mind, and an over valuation of earthly things; it proves us to be led by our senses, and not by right reason.

This covetousness is a kind of spiritual adultery. Not only he that looks upon his neighbour's wife, but he that looks upon his neighbour's house, or land, or goods, to covet them, is guilty of worldly love; and that is spiritual adultery. A sin little regarded, I suspect, but certainly very dreadful.

The first unchaste glances of the eye towards any thing that is our neighbour's, are forbidden; and it becomes us to be offended at them, to make haste to suppress them. But if we allow them to grow up into wilful and steady desires, they are that predominant love of the world that the apostle tells us is so pernicious.

See what severe notice God takes of this kind of covetousness; how he visited it in Eve, who coveted an evil covetousness to her posterity; in Achan and Ahab, who coveted an evil covetousness to their own houses.

There is no man that is over-greedy of possessing, but will sometimes desire to have what is none of his own. If this be the standing maxim, *Oportet habere*, [We must have;] it will follow, *Unde habeat quærit nemo*, [it is no matter how he comes by it.]

They deceive themselves, that excuse their covetousness, by saying, I covet nothing of your's, I desire nothing but mine own. This cannot be; every worldly minded man is guilty of this covetousness; for the same nature and principle that prompts men so greedily to grasp their own, will certainly put them upon a desire to obtain other men's.

This kind of covetousness has a great deal of injustice in it; it is a kind of stealing. He that lusts after a woman, is an adulterer; he that hates his brother, is a murderer; and by a parity of reason, he that covets is a thief.

Lord, who knows how oft he is guilty in one degree or other! Help me to make a covenant with my eyes, lest they betray me in looking upon my neighbour's house, as well as his wife!

There may be covetousness, in too vehement desiring of what is another man's, though one be willing to give a sufficient price for it. I do not think it will excuse Ahab from covetousness, that he offered a full price or a good exchange for Naboth's vineyard. Nay, the very over-buying of a thing, (if it be judicious) is an argument of covetousness; if some present necessity, or unseen convenience do not excuse it. And what can one make of them that cry, I wish such a thing were mine to bestow upon you; or, I wish it were mine, so that no body were the worse for it? What, I say, can any man make of these, but fools and covetous?

To heal us of this disease, let us learn not to overvalue earthly things. They are all lovely only in God. In him we may enjoy the sweet-

ness of all these things, without possessing the things themselves; so far as we are spiritualized, we live upon God, and enjoy all things in him, and cannot be covetous.

The sin of Eve was, that she coveted to be like unto God in his incommunicable properties. If she had been omniscient as God, then God had not been omniscient; for there cannot be two omniscients. But the only laudable covetousness is, to covet to be like unto God in his communicable perfections.

MEDITATION XL.

Περὶ πλεονεξίας, *or, of covetousness.*

An immoderate, greedy desire of worldly things, though not attended with another man's hurt or loss, is covetousness.

To seek an unwieldy greatness and fulness in the world, to extend one's care to children's children's children; what does this import, but an over valuation of the world, and an atheistical distrust of God?

To be more studious of worldly accommodations, than of enriching the mind with virtue; of gaining an estate, than of saving the soul; of portions for children, more than of their education; is palpable preference of the world before God, and rank covetousness.

And what excuse can be made for those greedy tradesmen, that appoint to themselves no end, no measure of getting? I know indeed that an

employment is good; and I know also, that there are many good ways of men's employing themselves, besides hoarding riches. I suspect these men do never sincerely examine themselves, whether all this time, in all these pains that they take, they act out of pure, conscientious desire to live in an employment. Methinks it is very agreeable to the temper of universal charity, to say, Now that I have provided for my own house, when shall my brethren provide for their houses also! I will make room for those that are straitened; I have eaten and drunken, now let them also eat and drink. Or if pure conscientious desire of an employment keep them in their station, that they will still work with their hands the things which they account good, let it be to give to him that needeth.

Much wealth necessarily brings along with it much care; many fears do usually increase; worldly desires will be followed with great accounts. And to prefer this before the peace and quietness of our minds, and the easiness and sufficiency of our accounts, favours of great imprudence, and impiety.

I know covetousness is hard to be discerned, and it is of so ill a name that few will own it. But the Searcher of hearts does discern it; and his word does describe the men that are guilty of it, by their hastening to be rich, by lading themselves with thick clay; by their willing to be rich, (1 *Tim.* vi. 9.) by their rising up early, late taking rest, eating the bread of sorrow, and the like. And we can partly discern men's necessities, their families, and their dependants; if their

worldly care exceed what these do in reason call for, it is to be suspected, that it is degenerated into covetousness.

To these intemperate desirers after wealth, I commend that plain but terrible text of our Lord's, *It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven.* What a strange task is this! Yea, though we should be so favourable as to interpret it of a cable rope, which yet the spelling of the word will not endure. A camel go through the eye of a needle? it implies the greatest human impossibility.

Oh, but (says the worldling,) God can effect this; for the text tells us for our comfort, *That with him all things are possible.*

But I pray, friend, How know you that God will? Is it not that God, who hath commanded you not to covet, not to labour after the meat that perisheth, not to be careful what to eat and to drink, not to seek great things for yourselves, not to lay up treasures for yourselves on earth?

Oh, but they can evade the reproof at least by distinguishing. By rich men are there meant, Those that trust in riches. Now, say they, we can avoid that well enough.

Nay, not so easily neither. If it were so easy a thing, What need rich men be charged so severely that they do not trust in riches? It seems rather to be very difficult, next to impossible; in that Christ hath made having riches, and trusting in riches, to be phrases of the same import, *Mark*, x. 23, 24. The Scripture records those few that were rich and good, as wonders of di-

vine grace, as instances of omnipotence. And indeed there are but very few of them. He was considered a prodigy, *Quisquis ingentes oculo irretorto spectat acervos*, [who could look calmly on vast heaps of wealth;] and so he may be now.

It is the character of a disciple of Christ, To forsake house and lands for his name's sake. And is it an argument of a mind so disposed, a sign of a soul so prepared, to be perpetually grasping after more, and to be joining house to house, and land to land?

If they that hunger after righteousness, are therefore blessed, because they shall be filled, I am sure they must needs be cursed, that hunger after the *mammon* of unrighteousness; for they are not, cannot, shall not be filled.

Oh the shame that is upon the professors of the religion of Christ Jesus! Men that pretend to a life more excellent than that of a prince, to be guilty of covetousness! All their religion is vain, who mind earthly things. O Lord, incline my heart to thy testimonies, and not to covetousness!

MEDITATION XLI.

Of carefulness.

I will descend a little lower, to consider of worldly carefulness. This is directly contrary to faith in the promises and providence of God, and so is preferring of the world before him.

It proceeds from a distrust of God's providence, which distrust is very sinful and dishonourable; nay, it is as if one should refuse to take God's word for sufficient security. However light men make of it, and however small a fault the worldling represents it to himself, sure I am, our Saviour connects it with gluttony and drunkenness, and seems to make it as bad a fault and as dangerous as those, (Luke xxi. 34.) *Take heed lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting or drunkenness, or cares of this life,* &c.

It argues a want of ingenuous affiance in God, and is perplexing to the mind, hindering converse with God, which is the highest perfection, and the greatest happiness of the souls of men.

What can I say worse of it, than that it is unseemly, uneasy, unsafe, and unprofitable? For after all our cares, all events depend upon God; and all human solicitude cannot alter or fix one event, nor make the least change in the course of things, *Not one hair white or black.*

I do not remember that Christ Jesus was ever more industrious in arguing against any thing, than against this worldly carefulness, *Mat.* vi. Read the Gospel throughout, and I do not think you will find him to have set himself more against any sin than this.

Our heavenly Father is very gracious in offering his help for our relief against this carefulness. *The curse be upon me,* said Rebekah to her son Jacob. Kind mother! Such is the kindness of our Father, *Cast your care upon me.* It is an easy and pleasant thing to depend upon another,

to trust to Almighty Goodness, in comparison of what careful anxiety is.

Diligence is not this carefulness; care is not so much forbidden us as carefulness. This solicitousness about the world is known to be sinful, by the unceasonableness of it, the immoderateness of it; when men take more care, and exercise their minds much more about the things of the body, than of the soul; of time, than of eternity.

Lord, make me to understand the value of my soul, and the danger that it is in, that my thoughts and cares may be mainly bestowed upon the preservation of it! Let me see the particular providence of God, which reaches even to every sparrow, and single hair of my head; and believe all his gracious promises, so as not to be any more solicitous about this world!

MEDITATION XLII.

Of discontentedness.

Discontent is the tumult or mutiny of the soul. In civil affairs, mutiny is accounted a degree of treason; and it is no less in spiritual.

A restlessness and unsatisfiedness of mind with our present condition, is preferring of our own wills, or our own ease and accommodation, before the will of God.

This I distinguish from impatience, for impatience always supposes evils; but discontent may be in plentiful and good condition.

When this discontent is predominant, it argues a worldly temper, a soul too much affected towards worldly things, and an unsubduedness to the will of God; it argues, I say, pride and unbelief.

It is plainly our duty to be contented with such things as we have.

What then, may some one say, May we not pray to be delivered out of affliction, out of prison, debt, or disease?

This objection belongs to the head of impatience, to which I refer it.

But may not a man seek to have more, though he have enough; to be still richer and richer?

Ans. In general, it is an admirable temper to seek nothing. If we have enough we ought not to desire more; for by the same rule we may desire still more than that, and yet more, and no measure will be put to our desires.

But it will be asked, What is enough?

Which is a very hard question to answer. It is not the same to all; yet there is such a quantum as enough in the world. To the apostle Paul food and raiment were enough, 1 *Tim.* vi. 8. To Jacob, bread to eat, and raiment to put on, were enough, *Gen.* xxviii. 20. A little is enough if we reckon right, if we reckon wrong nothing is. *Natura paucis contenta*, was the old saying, Nature is content with few things; and sure grace desires no more. Let us contemplate the holy Jesus, and consider what he accounted enough. It is most certain that he might have had more, therefore his was not a forced contentment; so far as can be gathered from his

story, a small pittance in the world was enough to him.

I know it may be replied, Christ had no children to provide for.

I answer, that he had a great deal of kindred whom to make great. We are told in the history of Nepotism, That those that pretend to great holiness are much given to hoard for their nephews, though they have no children.

Suppose we have children, if we know what is truly enough for ourselves, we may know what is enough for them. Will it certaily be the better for them to be left rich? I am sure it proves worse to many; a fuel to vice, and that is worst. Poor men's children commonly prove the best; not only the best men, but the best scholars, the best artists. To marry children richly, is not the way to make them better, but prouder, and idler. The best provision for children, is education; the best matching them, is the uniting of their souls to God.

But what shall we say to those that covet for they know not whom; that have neither child nor brother, yet are not satisfied with riches, *Eccl.* iv. 8. If this be not vanity, I know not what is.

But still it will be pretended, We desire more only to have to give away, and to do good with.

This, I doubt not, is but a pretence, and a mere fallacy. Has any man indeed so great a desire to do good, that he will load himself with certain accounts, for the uncertain thing of doing good; venture upon temptations and snares, endanger his soul to do good? This would be a

fervent lover of God indeed. But who will show him to me!

Lord, convince me of the wisdom of the Divine will, that cares for all men most suitably. Let my soul be so overpowered with the sense of it, that I may prefer nothing! Mortify in me all proud preference to my own will and wisdom before thine! Suffer me not to allow myself in any discontent, but a holy weariness of my distance from thee, and a holy restlessness in my motions towards my centre! Amen, Amen.

MEDITATION XLIII.

Of immoderate Mourning, or Impatience.

Immoderate sorrow for the want or loss of worldly things, springs from an intemperate love of the world. It is certainly a preferring of worldly things before the will and wisdom of God. Hereby we contradict it, resist it; we would destroy it if we could, and set up our wills in its stead.

It is very foolish too; for if we bind up our hearts in worldly things, and they happen to fly away, they carry away our hearts too, and leave us dead and stupified.

It worketh death sometimes in the plainest sense; men go down into the grave by mourning; but in a spiritual sense certainly it is fatal and destructive, if predominant.

It must be confessed, that many good people have had seasons and passions of this; but this

will not justify others; it was unseemly in them; let us beware that that be not predominant and habitual in us, which in them was only a violence, a sudden fit of passion, which they subdued presently, and ever repented of.

This impatience of evils is very unreasonable. *Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not also receive evil?* Who am I, poor, proud, sinful wretch, that I should fancy myself to be such a darling of Heaven, that it should not so much as suffer the cold air to breathe upon me? Shall I be glad to receive the good which I have not deserved, and be angry to bear the evil that I have?

It is unreasonable upon God's account too. The degree and duration of all sickness is weighed out exactly by an infinitely wise mind. The cup that is given us to drink is mingled, and presented by our heavenly Father. Moreover, this wise God is infinitely kind too; *He doth not willingly afflict, nor delight to grieve the children of men*, Lam. iii. 33. He would not afflict them but for some good that he hath in view.

When we pray, That the will of God may be done, it seems we mean his will of kindness only. Lord, we are willing that thou shouldest bless us, and do us as much good as may be; but nothing of thy afflicting will; Oh no. Or if that must be done, let it be done upon others, not upon us. Oh rarely distinguished; as if we should say, Our Father, we desire that thy will may be done and executed universally; but yet with this limitation and restriction, that it do not cross our wills at any time. Or will we understand

our prayers so, as that all men should be ready to do the will of God, but not that God should do his own will? Rare divinity!

Oh but my impatience and immoderate mourning over losses of estate, relations, health, doth not proceed from any over-valuation of them, but from the sense of God's displeasure, he afflicts me for my sin; thus providence is a judgment, a punishment; and may I not, ought I not to lay it to heart?

Ans. You believe so; and therefore you infer, that it is reasonable to be impatient. You do well, to be angry, and intemperate. And I pray, why should we not be content that God should punish us for our faults? Ought we not to submit to the discipline of our heavenly Father, as well as to the parents of our flesh? It is hard to say when God punishes his children for their faults; but be sure however, that it is for their amendment. And to be impatient that we are corrected for our faults, is an ill kind of repentance, it adds faults to faults.

Good God, mould my will into thy holy will! Thou art fatherly and friendly in thy corrections; rather smite me, than not recover me; rather make up my way with thorns, than suffer me to wander from thee; make me more willing to give my back to the smiter, than to perish for want of chastisement! Let my afflictions bring forth the pleasant fruits of righteousness, not the sour and harsh fruits of impatience!

MEDITATION XLIV.

Of uncharitableness.

THERE are many sorts of uncharitableness; but because I am considering the riches of the world, I will confine myself to that of not giving alms.

Not to give at all, and to have bowels perfectly shut up against the indigent, is the grossest uncharitableness. So gross, that I think few are guilty of it, and none will confess it.

To give something, but grudgingly, and with an ill will, is uncharitableness; not to take pleasure in this exercise, spoils it. Men may be many ways forced to give, and yet no thanks to them; it does not proceed from a charitable mind.

To give sparingly, is uncharitableness. Not that true charity consists in the quantity, but in the principle. The Gospel-widow gave much in giving her mite. But not to give proportionably to what God hath given us, and as the necessities of our families will permit, is uncharitableness. Nay I suppose that the nature of true charity requires, that a man do sometimes deny himself, and straiten his own family in some degree, to relieve the necessities of others.

If any one would know the just proportions of charity, I confess I do not find them precisely stated in the word of God, neither is it an argument of a charitable mind to be curious in this inquiry; I suspect those who are so, as I do those who labour much to know the lowest degree of

saving grace. To those that ask, How much more must we give? I will not answer as our Saviour did in a similar case, *If you will be perfect, go, sell all, and give to the poor;* but I will desire them seriously to consider of the proportion which God expressly required the Israelites to give to the Levites and to the poor; and of that tenth part, which it is reported that Dr. Hammond and many other charitable persons, have thought themselves bound to devote to charitable uses; and then only add with our Saviour, *Go thou and do likewise.* But it is against the nature of charity to be stinted. I think therefore if we lived by this short rule at present, it might do well; to give what we can spare, and to spare what is more than enough for our own use. When I and my family have eaten a dish of meat, I do not grudge to give the rest to the poor. And so I argue "when I have enough for myself and mine, the rest belongs to the poor." And would to God men would know when they have enough of riches, as they do, when they have eaten and drunk sufficiently!

To give that which is another man's is not charity; or at least it is an ill governed charity, that is not in conjunction with justice.

O thou that takest pleasure in the communications of thyself, that gloriest in sending forth rays of thy own perfections, who rejoicest in thy works of bounty and mercy, conform me also to this divine disposition, that I may rejoice to do good; account it a better and more blessed thing to give than to receive; be better pleased to find an object, upon whom to bestow a treas-

ure, than to find a treasure! And let this rejoicing be pure; not springing from the hopes of a reward, (lest my very charity at last should be found to be covetousness,) nor from applause in this world (lest it should be pride) but from a principle of God-like love, Christ-like compassion, and rational belief, that it is better to give to them that need, than to keep what one needs not!

And O my soul, what does it profit, what signifies the mere profession of gold more than of stones? The use then is all. And what better use can there be of any thing, than to make it serve a public good? *quo communius eo melius.* [the more common a thing is, so much the better it is.]

MEDITATION XLV.

Of pleasure in general.

The general notion of pleasure is a gratification of any faculty; or a satisfaction resulting from the union of the faculty with the object. From whence it follows, that there must needs be the greatest pleasure in the enjoyment of God; especially when all the faculties shall be advanced and enlarged.

It is not hard to say, nor hard to conceive, that man's chief happiness consists in pleasure; for the happiness wherein man takes no pleasure is not happiness. Heaven itself cannot make a mind happy that cannot delight in it.

It is lawful to take pleasure in the things which we possess. Solomon seems to make it an argument of a worldly mind not to do so; sure I am a man may do so, and yet not be sensually voluptuous. It is strange that covetous men, who love the world most, should yet find the least pleasure in it; they can take no pleasure in what they have, on account of their grasping after what they have not.

Covetousness seems to be more unnatural than voluptuousness. Innocent nature aims at the gratification of itself, even in the creatures that have not sinned. To enjoy present good things, and not to lay up in store, is the commendation of birds, the moral virture of sparrows.

Yea, pleasure seems not only to be lawful, but necessary. Life would not be life without it. If there were not a thing called enjoyment, as well as possession, the bird, that makes her nest where she pleases, would be as rich as the greatest landlord. It is impossible but that nature should take pleasure in the supply of her wants, in the gratification of her appetites. Pleasure is as natural to sensitive creatures, as appetite, and appetite as being.

But however natural the pleasures of sense are, there is a mighty difference between the pleasures of minds and spirits. The pleasures of the flesh last no longer than whilst the necessities of nature are supplying themselves; enjoy them and you lose them. The pleasures of the spirit are fine and strong, and (like itself) lasting, everlasting, *pleasures for evermore.*

MEDITATION XLVI.

Of worldly pleasure.

THERE have heretofore been, and it is prophesied that there shall be hereafter, men that love pleasure more than God. Whoever these sensualists are, the love of God is not in them. For the predominant love of sensual pleasures is inconsistent with the saving love of God. If the belly be our God, our end will be destruction; God shall destroy both it and us. If we serve our own bellies, we serve not the Lord Jesus Christ; whom if any man serve not, love not, he is *anathema maran atha.*

The predominant love of pleasures is deadly; *if ye live after the flesh ye shall die.* Yea, it is death itself. What the apostle says of every widow that liveth in pleasure, is true of every woman, yea, and man too, *They are dead whilst they live*, 1 Tim. v. 6. This was the father's opinion of his voluptuous, prodigal son, during his riotous course of life, *he was dead*, Luke xv. 24.

To take more pleasure in the gratification of the bodily senses, than of the soul, What is this, but to advance the beast above the man? To give up one's self to the pleasures of the flesh, more than of the mind; to prefer them before the enjoyment of God, before the exercise of virtue, is to be a *lover of pleasures more than of God*, and consequently to be the lover of the world here spoken of.

I know it is hard to convince a man that he is habitually intemperate in his pleasures. But certainly, when men do industriously, from time to time, pursue their pleasures, and that in things unlawful, these must needs be the pleasures of sin, and this is manifest sensuality. Yea, though it be not in things directly forbidden, if the pursuit be with more zeal and industry, and more expense of time, than is given to the interest and concernments of the soul, it must needs be accounted sensuality, and a living after the flesh.

When every particular man has exculpated himself, (as the worst of men will do) and denied the charge of being sensualists; yet it remains a certain truth, that there are many lovers of pleasure, more than of God; such as live in pleasures upon earth, as the apostle terms it, *Jam.* v. 5. not lap and be gone as a dog at Nilus; but they wallow in them; they swim in them; they immerse themselves in them; they delight in them as in their proper elements. Such as *love pleasures*, as Solomon speaks, *Prov.* xxi. 17. Such as are *given to pleasures*, as the prophet describes them, *Isa.* xlvii. 8. Such as *serve divers pleasures*, as the apostle speaks, *Tit.* iii. 3. Such as *fare deliciously every day*, as is said of Dives. Such, like beasts, nourish their hearts as in a day of slaughter. These surely are predominant lovers of pleasure. And are there not many such now, as well as there were in the days of those prophets and apostles? Let us not mistake; a man may sin in his pleasures, who does not take pleasure in sin.

Carnal pleasures I reckon to be either sensual, or fantastical Thus I will distinguish them for

method sake. Although those of the fancy may, for ought I know, be properly called sensual. I think divines reckon them so; and fancy itself may well be called a bodily sense, being found in beasts as well as men.

Now these sensual pleasures become unlawful, either by their matter, measure, manner, or season. And in this order I will address my meditations to them, and afterwards consider the pleasures of fancy.

MEDITATION XLVII.

Of breaches of the seventh commandment.

Among the sensual pleasures that are unlawful in the very matter, fornication and adultery offer themselves especially to be considered. To prefer these pleasures of the flesh, and gratifications of the beastly appetite before purity, is a predominant love of the world.

Whilst we carry about such bodies as these, we shall have an appetite to conjunction, as well as to eating or drinking; and to think perfectly and properly to mortify it, (for I do not call restraints, mortification,) seems to be somewhat like the fanatical humour, of living without meat.

The lust of hunger is best mortified, by being *duly* gratified; and perhaps the best, if not only way of subduing this appetite, is to accommodate it, in the ways and seasons allowed by the God of nature; and shall no more be interpreted a making provision for the flesh, to fulfil it in the lusts

thereof, than the most innocent kind of cookery is so.

Who can blame the philosopher that would eat, though he took no delight in the meat, yet who did it to be rid of the importunity of hunger, which solicited him and wearied him so, that he could not follow his studies, and was glad when the trouble of eating was over. *Dare operam liberis* is but a toil; and such an one as a wise man is afterwards ashamed that he has taken. To find no need, and to have no appetite, in this case, (as indeed in most others) is more easy and pleasant to a good and wise man, than to have relief and satisfaction. For my own part, if I were put to my choice, I would much rather choose, never to be hungry or thirsty, than to eat and drink at pleasure.

But however natural this appetite is, God has founded it, and determined it to its object. Eating is a natural action, and to hunger is a natural lust; yet some meats we know were forbidden, so are some conjunctions, on pain of everlasting ruin.

As the case now stands with man, I think marriage is a merciful institution, and much for man's ease. it is better to be restricted here, than left at liberty; as it is better for a traveller to be bound up to one safe way, than to have many ways from which to choose.

And as it is a merciful institution, because it avoids perplexity; so because it escapes superfluity, &c. One woman is sufficient for one man; which makes adultery more inexcusable in the males, than in the females.

Marriage is also very much for order. What a miserable confusion would there be in the world, if promiscuous connection were allowed! Yea, even those more than brutish epicures, who will plead for it to be allowed to themselves, do not allow it to their horses and dogs. For they that would keep up a right strain, and a generous breed, will not suffer the female to couple with every male.

Marriage, and the just observation of the marriage covenant, is also for the health of men; whereas fornication and adultery bring diseases, filthy and lothsome diseases upon the body.

And who can sufficiently bewail the defilement of the land? Alas! that so many families in one city, of the most reformed nation upon earth, should be maintained by the curing of diseases, brought by such sins, as the better sort of the heathens abominated, and ought not to be once named among us, as becometh Christians!

Whether there would have been separation of goods in the state of innocence, is justly doubted; but for wives, no doubt there would. For even innocent Adam was formally married. God has made an inclosure of the females, and wo to him that violates it. The adulterer therefore is as properly a thief, as he that robs his neighbour's orchard, and much more heinously so.

Oh thou blessed Spirit of purity, help me to make a covenant with mine eyes, that I do not look upon a woman to lust after her! Let my soul be wholly charmed with the beauty of holiness! Give me always to possess my vessel in sanctification and honour, that I be not defiled in esh nor fancy!

MEDITATION XLVIII.

Of gluttony and drunkenness.

Next to the sensual pleasures that are unlawful in the matter, come to be considered those that are unlawful in the measure. The matter of the pleasure in eating and drinking, is lawful; but the measure makes them both no pleasure, and sinful too. Whosoever takes pleasure in meat or drink more than in God, is a lover of the world.

For the gratification of the sensual appetite, to eat or drink things forbidden, was to prefer the service of sense, before the authority of God; since the difference of meats and drinks is taken away, to eat, though it be honey; and to drink, though it be wine, to excess, is the same.

But this excess is not simply to be estimated by the quantity. Some men may and ought to eat and drink more than others, and in so doing are not excessive, because nature is but well relieved in these by such a quantum, though in others it would be oppressed. It is unphysical and unchristian, to judge another man by my proportion. He that should appoint the same measure of manure to feed, or desire the same measure of rain to refresh all sorts of ground, and should make no difference between the land of Canaan, and the land of Egypt, would forfeit his skill in husbandry. Yea, though a thirsty traveller or labourer, or an unwary Noah should chance to be drunk with a draught of wine, he

would be innocent, in comparison of the tippler, who yet can wipe his mouth, and go home, and say, *He is not drunk.*

Much less is excess to be estimated by the distemper consequent upon eating and drinking. Many men are gluttons, that do not surfeit; and drunkards, that are not drunk. The sober and temperate are sometimes distempered with that quantum with which the intemperate are not affected. Many can sit by the wine from morning till night, and not be inflamed; and yet if a very good call do not justify them, a wo may belong to them for all that, and they may be reckoned among the drunkards.

The truth is, it requires much skill in physic, as well as in divinity, to know exactly how not to offend in eating or drinking. And certainly if we cannot be perfect casuists concerning ourselves, much less can we be concerning other men. Such is the constitution of this body that perhaps few men go to bed not unduly affected, in some kind or degree or other, with meat or drink. Let wise men judge, whether they be altogether so wise and well at night, as they were fasting. By the time we have well thought how small a mistake either in the kind, or measure, or season of meat and drink, may in some degree offend, we shall have reason to subscribe to the proverbial aphorism, *Anima sicca est sapientissima*, [The fasting soul is the wisest.] But yet there are such sins as gluttony and drunkenness, and they are symptoms of a worldly mind, and they are to be judged by the predominant inclination and appetite.

The preference of the meat and drink that perisheth, before that which endureth to everlasting life, denominates a carnal man, (if not, properly speaking, a glutton or drunkard,) Christ himself being judge. I know it is not spoken against sensuality, but covetousness, and yet it may indifferently be applied to either, that taking thought what to eat and to drink, does make us to symbolize with heathens, *Matt.* vi. 31, 32.

To be studious for the palate, to pamper and indulge the appetite, to make provision for the flesh, *to fare sumptuously every day*, to mind the gratification of the senses more than the service of God, the public good, the relief of the poor, the nourishment of the soul, is a gluttonous, at least a sensual way of living.

To follow after strong drink, to provoke to intemperate drinking, to be mighty to drink and to exercise that might, to strive to drink down others, to drink for wages or victory, to prefer a drinking life before business and usefulness, is awfully sensual, and a kind of drunkenness too, though it neither stammer nor stagger.

What then? are we limited in eating and drinking to a bit or a sup; as, in speaking, to yea and nay? Lord, what man upon earth so wise as to know, so exact as to observe such a point!

Surely there is an innocent entertainment; as well as a necessary relief of nature; but what casuist can state it? Any degree of eating or drinking that fits us for higher offices seems to be lawful.

Lord, I beseech thee grant that my appetite may be always subject to my will, my will to my reason, my reason to thy holy word! Grant that I may not take undue pleasure in wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with thy Holy Spirit! That I may not serve my own will or lust in eating or drinking, but make it my meat and drink to do thy will! That I may, by a divine communion, continually eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of God; in which there is no danger of surfeiting! Oh there let me insatiably hunger and thirst!

MEDITATION XLIX.

Of pleasures unlawful in the manner.

Pleasure, which is neither sinful in the matter nor measure, may be so in the manner.

To eat and drink is in itself innocent, and a natural, innocent delight may be reaped from it; but to relish and delight in these innocent pleasures, as natural gratifications, is gross and sensual.

The most refined souls, whilst they are in conjunction with these earthly bodies, must find pleasure in what gratifies the natural appetite; but they find more pleasure in other objects, pleasure of another nature.

The soul ought to taste the sweetness of God, as well as the palate relish the created sweetness of meat and drink; it ought to behold the

amiableness of God, as well as the eye behold and admire any created beauty.

If we do not rise by the particular, created goodness of the creature, to the uncreated goodness, the Father of lights, we are gross and sensual. How gross are the Amorettos of the world, who stand gazing upon the sweet features and charming complexion of a mistress; the worldlings, who dote upon the fabric of a house, or the shape of a horse, and contemplate nothing higher.

How can I commend the convenience of riches, the refreshments of meat and drink, the pleasantness of sleep, the sweetness of friends, or of life, and not ascend to riches, refreshment, rest, love, life itself.

That whereby any thing is in any kind excellent, is some communication from God, something of and from him. Why then stand we gazing and doting upon beautiful objects? Why so ravished with melodious sounds? Can we not contemplate harmony in the abstract; nor beauty, except it be incarnate? Can we enjoy nothing but what we can see or hear, or handle? O dull and degenerate souls!

O thou most blessed and eternal Spirit, refine and spiritualize my apprehensions and sensations; that I may see thee in every thing that I see, taste thee in every thing I eat and drink! Thou leadest me by the streams, but suffer me not to lie down there, but help me to pursue them up to the Fountain. Oh that I were a Jacob, and that every creature were a ladder, whereby thou mightest descend upon me, and my soul might ascend up unto thee!

MEDITATION L.

Of pleasures unlawful as to the season.

THERE is a season for every thing, and the right time of things makes them beautiful.

The pleasures that are lawful and honest, nay, and seem almost to have some relation to religion, may at some times be intermitted. The disciples could not fast whilst the Bridegroom was with them; but that is not wonderful. Aaron could not feast before the Lord when such and such things had befallen him, (*Lev.* x.) and Moses could not blame him. There may be a time when the very pleasant praises of the Lord may seem unpleasant, and the songs of Sion be discordant. The apostle, by his disjunctive discourse, seems to imply some such thing, concerning the Christian psalmody, that it is not seasonable in a time of affliction; *If any be afflicted, let him pray; If any be merry, let him sing psalms.*

But to lead a merry, jocund life, to give up one's self to eating and drinking, and sports, in a time when God calls to weeping and mourning, is proof of a profane and profligate sensualist, and seems to be an unpardonable presumption. Isa. xxii. 14. *It is revealed in my ears by the Lord God of hosts, Surely this iniquity shall not be purged away from you till you die. How unseemly is it for me,* said David, *to dwell in cedar, and the ark of God in curtains? For me to rest myself upon a soft bed, when my general lies upon the hard ground. To solace myself with my beautiful wife, whilst the ar-*

mies of God are looking death in the face, is not seemly for me, said that noble captain Uriah.

If adultery had been lawful and genteel, yet the conduct of Zimri was absurd, when all Israel were then mourning under God's judgments. The text imputes it as an act of great weakness in that king, who was drinking himself drunk in his tent, when the enemy was upon him, and he should have been ordering his battle; which puts me in mind of the reproof that the old man in the comedy gives an idle servant, *In ipsa turba, atque in peccato maximo, potasti, scelus; Quasi re bene gesta,* [It is a crime to be intoxicated in the midst of a multitude, and of the greatest danger; as though all things were succeeding well.] To be fiddling when the city is on fire, is a character fit for Nero. For an old woman to dance, according to the Latin proverb, makes death laugh in his sleeve.

To sport when the afflicting hand of God is upon ourselves or the church, when imminent dangers threaten; in a time of universal wickedness, (with the old world,) to give up ourselves to all fleshly pleasures, is far worse than to eat flesh in Lent.

Lord, how like is the new world to the old one! But shall there not yet be a newer, *wherein dwelleth righteousness?* There, then, shall be *pleasures for evermore.*

Oh but it is the part of a brave, bold spirit to be unconcerned, not to be baffled nor frightened out of the enjoyment of itself. Give Horace his mistress, and come on him what can,

What an heroic thing is Atheism! Nay, rather, this is a beastly valour; such as the courage of the horse in Job, *that mocketh at fear, and saith among the trumpets, Ha, ha;* or of the leviathan, *that laugheth at the shaking of the spear.*

Lord, the pleasures of the flesh are mean and beastly things at best; but when they are thus unseasonable, it adds wickedness to their meanness, and devilishness to their beastliness. Enable me to observe the operation of thy hands. Teach me to distinguish the time to weep from the time to laugh. Let my reason ever maintain a just dominion over my appetite, my senses, yea, and my fancy too!

MEDITATION LI.

Of fantastical pleasures.

THERE are pleasures of the fancy, which may be distinguished from the pleasures of the senses, though divines use to confound them. To prefer these before God, is to be a predominant lover of the world.

I know of no sin but what may be acted over in the fancy, and affect the body no further.

A mental dalliance with a mistress, though it injures not another person, yet is adultery, and is a preference of the world before chastity and purity. The vigour of the fancy both prevents and survives bodily uncleanness. There are earlier and later adulteries in fancy than in senses. *Incestos amores a tenero meditatur ungui,* [He

meditates unlawful loves in his tender years,] says the poet; and fancy acts over again the uncleanness to which the body is insufficient.

Covetousness is acted, yea, mainly acted in the fancy. Oh the full bags and barns, the large fields, the mountains of gold that are to be found in a covetous fancy! Sure these men who fancy such great things to themselves, and delight in such fancies, are they whom the prophet Ezekiel speaks of, *whose heart goeth after their covetousness.*

Pride is acted mainly upon the stage of fancy, though sometimes it breaks forth into words, as in Nebuchadnezzar; yea, sometimes it never goes further than the fancy, and yet is mortal and deadly, as seems to have been the case of Herod, whose fancy was pleased with the blasphemous acclamations of the people, *and he gave not God the glory.*

The distractions and strange rovings of fancy, after impertinent things, in a careless and incoherent manner, is a great corruption. And to give the reins to a roving desultory fancy, without seeking to reduce and reclaim it, is a predominant sensuality. Methinks that even to think nonsense for an hour together, should shame a wise man; what can any man think of those that are more solicitous to reclaim the wild ranging of their dogs, than of their fancies, except that the bestial part doth predominate over the rational.

Who can sufficiently lament the sad disorder of the fancy, and the evil to which it betrays us? How unseemly and unjust it is, that our thoughts,

which are the first-born of our souls, should be so squandered away in a manner more foolish than children's pursuing of butterflies, or following of birds through thick and thin, [*testaque lutoque.*]

O my mind, hast thou so lovely an object, and such important matters to bestow thyself upon as God, and the things of eternal life; and canst thou have leisure to dream away thy time, and spend thy powers upon things that are not, that need not be, that never will be? Dost thou laugh at the chimeric fictions of poets, and yet spend thy strength in poetry? Dost thou account it time next to lost, to read romances, and yet canst be at leisure every day to make them?

Lord, what a fickle, ungovernable thing is man's fancy! How is this contexture of the body a snare to my soul; diverting, hindering, spoiling its operations? Fancy is a necessary faculty, without which I can perform no action; and alas how has sin got into it, and defiled it, poisoned the very fountain?

To a worldly fancy, I might add also a worldly memory. For, certainly, to be able to remember all worldly concernments, and still to forget the matters of the soul, and the world to come, is a sad symptom of a worldly mind. But among the corrupt pleasures of the fancy, I must insist a little upon revenge, because it is frequently acted only upon the stage of fancy, and does not proceed into action. And all this while vain men are apt to think themselves free from it. To this therefore I will now apply my thoughts.

MEDITATION LII.

Of revenge.

Under the head of fantastical pleasures, I place revenge, partly because I do not foresee any head to which it will be so fitly reduced; and partly, because I think it is more usually terminated in the fancy, than other sins are. If a man be of a proud, lustful, covetous fancy, undoubtedly he will show it one time or other, in words, actions, or behaviour, that shall be significant. But revenge may be, and I think is usually terminated in the fancy, for want of power or opportunity to show itself.

Revengefulness is a temper that does most certainly indicate the predominance of the worldly nature above the divine.

It seems, in short, to be nothing else, but a retaliation or retribution of injuries either contrived or executed; which is a thing so difficult and nice, and requires so much clearness of apprehension, and purity of mind, that no mortal man may meddle with it. It is beyond all created skill, and therefore God does challenge and appropriate it to himself alone. He allows men to share with him in his other perfections; to imitate his wisdom, mercy, patience, justice. *But vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord*, Rom. xii. 19. And again, *Vengeance belongeth to me, saith the Lord*, Heb. x. 30.

It is a great mistake in men, to imagine that so long as they restrain their hands, they have com-

mitted no murder, because no one can indict or arraign them. For a revengeful temper is murder; *He that hateth his brother is a murderer*, 1 John iii. 15.

Revenge does not consist in the doing of mischief. To desire it, to contrive it, to meditate with pleasure upon it, to rejoice in it if done by any other, is revenge; yea, to suspend necessary and usual kindnesses, not to give meat to an enemy if he hunger; yea, not to love an enemy, is a degree of revenge.

The Gospel excels all philosophy, in the doctrine of revenge. The philosophers, yea, and the Jews generally, held it no sin to do evil to one that had hurt or wronged them. They said, *Thou shalt hate thine enemy.* But the Gospel forbids all hatred, even of an enemy, and consequently all revenge. For there can be no revengefulness, without some degree of hatred.

It is a very spiritual and secret sin; it may exist, and yet not be discerned. It puts on divers shapes. Sometimes it would be mistaken for zeal, as in the case of the two disciples, calling for fire from heaven; themselves in the mean time little better than set on fire from hell. Sometimes it mingles itself with justice; *Bring her forth*, said Judah, *and let her be burnt. Yes, burn her by all means, rather than Shelah my youngest son shall marry her, lest he die as his brethren died.* Yea, sometimes it would fain pass for kindness, and be interpreted good nature, thus the king of Israel gave his daughter Michal to David to be a snare to him. And the philosopher with a crooked foot very charitably wished

his shoes might fit the feet of him that had stolen them. So far was he (good man) from revenge. A charitable, revengeful man gives his neighbour the hook. Malicious Absalom entertained his brother Amnon to his destruction. They say the devil's gifts are *Donata hamata*, there is a hook under the bait. And no doubt but the devil, as ill-natured as he is, does help some men to be rich; as he preferred the dog Hazael to be king of Syria, for no good will to him, but ill will to Israel.

Neither is revengefulness the sin of great men only. A poor man may be as revengeful, and take as much pleasure in fancying and meditating revenge, as the great ones of the world in executing it; who, for a word spoke amiss, presently termed an affront, must have satisfaction.

And to the carnal, whether rich or poor, no doubt but revenge is very sweet; and the fancy as much pleased and delighted with the imagination of it, as the bodily senses, with any act of intemperance or uncleanness. Who can but apprehend the pleasure that the swaggering giant took, in fancying revenge to be taken upon Ulysses, who had deceived and blinded him, when he hears the poet expressing it thus—*O si quis referat mihi casus Ulyssem, Aut aliquem ex sociis, in quem mea seviat ira, Viscera cujusdam*, &c.

Oh that some happy luck would bring
That rogue Ulysses, who's the king
Of that base crew, or any other
Belonging to him, son or brother!
That I might tear him limb from limb,

Before life hath forsaken him,
Whose very guts I'd rend and eat,
(My fattest venison not such meat.)
How would I make my teeth to meet
In 's trembling head and hands, and feet!
Oh how I'd quaff the rogue's heart's blood,
Till in my throat I made a flood!

One would think he saw him tearing the flesh, and drinking the blood of these men.

And indeed what was the greatest part of the renowned bravery of the Romans and Grecians in their wars, but revenge. But if we will stand a little, and compare the provocations done to Christ Jesus, and his behaviour under them all, we must confess and say, so great fortitude all the revengeful champions in the world never showed, as he, in not revenging himself at all; as he, in his *Father forgive them, they know not what they do.* No, nor as his dear disciple Stephen, in his *Lord lay not this sin to their charge*, Acts vii. 60.

I do not think it is simply unlawful to go to law. But if any man go to law without the least mixture of uncharitableness, or revengefulness, the same is a perfect man. I think lawyers do as truly live upon the diseases of men's minds, as physicians on their bodies.

Well, I see there is no revenge allowed me towards my neighbour, and yet there is such a kind of appetite in my nature; I will spend it therefore upon its proper object. Though self-murder is the worst of murders, yet self-revenge is the best of revenges.

Be revenged upon thine eyes, O my soul; not by pulling them out, but by shutting them; by

bringing them into covenant. Have thy senses betrayed thee? Deny them their liberty in some things lawful. Keep under that body, that has been petulant and troublesome. It was too severe revenge in the popish saint, who cut off his right hand that had suffered a too affectionate kiss of a female. But if thy senses abuse their liberty, retrench them; deny them sometimes of things lawful, if they will adventure upon things unlawful.

Oh blessed God, whose infinite purity, impartial justice, all-wise love, do render thee alone fit to take revenge, and to retaliate thy own injuries and mine too; perfectly mortify in me this appetite, and all that pride and self-love, that are the fuel of it. And inasmuch as I see it is by no means safe that such a sword be committed into the hands of such a mad man as I am, help me to commit my cause to him that judgeth righteously, without forestalling him, or prescribing to him; not determining the way, nor hastening the time, nor so much as desiring the thing! Oh that I may be able to say, I have not desired the evil day, Lord thou knowest; that I may seek the peace of Babylon, though I be a captive in it; yea, though in her peace I should be no sharer!

MEDITATION LIII.

Of cursing.

As a species of revenge, or at least a product of a revengeful mind, I may here seasonably meditate a little upon cursing.

There is a solemn cursing, or delivering up to mischief, performed by church-censure; which is a kind of revenging of God's quarrel, a discipline that he himself has committed into the hands of men, which they must take heed to use for him, not for themselves. The greatest thing, for ought I know, that God has committed into the hands of men.

This is easily, but wretchedly perverted, when the ministers of it revenge their own cause and quarrel, serve their own interest, and not God's; gratify their own lusts, more than the will of God; when they had rather that men should suffer than be reformed; be damned, than be amended.

There is an extraordinary and prophetical cursing, proceeding from an extraordinary motion of the Holy Spirit; found only in pure minds, and but seldom in them. Such was Elisha's cursing the wicked children, 2 *Kings* ii.

Those passages of David in the Psalms, I rather consider as prophetical denunciation, than a cursing of the wicked. Let us be sure we know what spirit we are of, before we adventure to imitate these inspired men.

And alas! Why should we curse the wicked, who are hastening to greater evil than we can wish them! Besides, charity would rather command us to pity them, and pray for them. So did Christ Jesus, so did holy Stephen, so did St. Paul for his judge Agrippa, and his persecutors the Jews, *Acts* xxvi. 29.

There is an extraordinary self-cursing by way of protestation, to be used sparingly, in weigh-

ty matters. I refer this to extraordinary swearing.

There is a profane cursing. And this is either extraordinary or ordinary; and both are symptoms of a worldly mind.

Extraordinary profane cursing is, when people in cool blood, knowing what they say, from a malicious mind, and sometimes with great solemnity of kneeling down, lifting up their hands, putting off the hat, do imprecate mischief upon a person that has wronged them, or offended them. This, when it is done formally, looks like a sacrament of the devil, an ordinance of hell, a kind of an exorcism. But a horrible presumption certainly it is, a prescribing to infinite wisdom, a taking of God's work out of his hands, an usurpation of divine prerogative. Wicked, bold man! How darest thou take upon thee the government of the world, and judge any man before his time? Darest thou employ the Almighty in a work, wherein he takes no pleasure; engage Love itself to act against his own nature unmercifully? To pray God, not to have mercy upon man, is the highest blasphemy. It is as if one should pray him to cease to be God.

Ordinary profane cursing, is either of ourselves, or others; and each is threefold; upon slight occasions, upon none at all, or worse than none

First, Of ourselves. When men upon every slight occasion, to confirm every inconsiderable truth, which it is no great matter whether it be believed or not, or may as well be confirmed and believed by a bare assertion, will wish they may never see the sun more, never open their hands more, that the drink might never go through

them, the meat might be their poison, that they might never stir more, might be hanged, that God would judge them, or that they might never enter into the kingdom of heaven, if such or such a thing, be so, or so. This I am sure is more than yea and nay; it is highly foolish, and indeed profane.

Man's knowledge is fallible, his memory frail, senses deceitful. And if this thing should prove otherwise, then, thou wicked man, out of thy own mouth thou shalt be condemned; so shall thy judgment be.

There are instances of God's taking such men at their words; but I need not insist upon them. It is an argument that men stand not in awe of God, when they dare invoke his judgments, and challenge his justice.

2*dly*, But when upon no occasion at all, to confirm nothing, men will dare God to damn them. Oh horrible and impudent impiety! These men have not so much mercy for themselves as the devils. They prayed that they might not be tormented before their time; these pray that they may. Of these, surely, if of any unbelievers, it may be properly said, that they are *condemned already.*

3*dly*, It is worse than no occasion, when men use cursing designedly, to commend themselves to acceptance, as an ornament and embellishment of speech.

Secondly, Of others.

1. When, constantly, upon every small provocation or offence, men will passionately call for vengeance, imprecate the plague upon others, or

it may be send men to the devil, upon no other errand, but to tell him, they are making haste after them.

2. When upon no provocation, in no passion, but in a familiar, jocular way, men curse one another; nay with the same breath, curse their friend, and swear how much they love him.

3. It is by some reputed a piece of familiarity. You must take it as a kindness, especially if you be an inferiour, that they will be so great with you, as to curse you, *Sic solent beare amicos*, [so they are accustomed to bless their friends.]

There is another sort of profane cursing, inferior to all these, a cursing in short-hand. Many men are ashamed to curse in words at length, but scruple not to do it in characters and abbreviations. If these men know the true original of these characters, and the meaning of them, it is the same as if they spoke in words at length. If they do not, but yet suspect them, it is bold, it is an adventuring upon an appearance of evil, which is strictly forbidden. Suppose they suspect nothing of this meaning in these common words. If they have no meaning, they are idle words; and that is bad enough. And if they profess sincerely, they know not what they mean, they proclaim themselves fools, that know not what they say. It is a miserable shift to embrace foolishness and madness to avoid profaneness.

But it is to be suspected, that they that mince the matter, do know the meaning of these characters well enough; how else could they apply them so aptly, so seasonably as they do? One may know they stand instead of a curse, because

they come in the order and place of one. When I hear a man say a pound on him, or a shackle on him, for I am much beholden to him, and he has much befriended me; then I will believe he knows not what he says.

It seems to be cleanly and charitable to wish men in heaven, and that God had them. But I have heard it come out of as profane mouths, and with as spiteful a design, as any curse.

Blessed God, who blessest us daily; communicate to us of thy gracious nature, that we also may bless and not curse! Let us never presume to reckon ourselves a part of Christ's purchase, till we find ourselves actually redeemed from our vain conversation received by tradition from our fathers!

MEDITATION LIV.

Of idleness.

Among sensual or fantastical pleasures, or a mixture of both, idleness must be ranked.

The greatest sensualists are usually most idle; yea though they take more pains in pursuit of their pleasure, than other men in their honest employments.

It is strange that pleasure should be painful, and idleness laborious; yet so it is.

Whosoever is not ordinarily well employed in good business, is idle. Such is the generation of all those that play away, sleep away, trifle away, visit away their time, from day to day; or who fearing lest time should not pass away fast enough,

make use of that sovereign recipe called pastime. This idleness turns man into a cypher, makes him insignificant; and surely I do not know a greater reproach to man, than to be unprofitable. An idle person is convicted and shamed by the whole creation, in which there is nothing insignificant or useless. I am persuaded, the devil himself would account it a shame to be idle; he seems to glory in his activity, (*Job* ii.) though it be in mischief. The sun never rises nor sets, the year never begins nor ends, but it is to the reproach of the idle person.

We have all great cause to lament the idleness and playfulness of our childhood and youth; and the many idle hours and days that we have spent, in which we have been no factors for God, no one the better for us, nor we ourselves been bettered.

Some say, They have no trade, they have nothing to do.

And are they too old to learn? Can they no way assist their neighbour by head nor hand? Can they not read good books, write good letters, or give good advice? Oh how is the want of education to be lamented! Parents teach their children nothing when they are young, and so they are good for nothing when they are old. *Hinc illæ lachrymæ*, [hence those tears.]

But have they indeed nothing to do, but to dress and feed themselves? How do many of them live then? They live on their money. But what, they cannot eat money. No, but they live upon usury. And will that excuse idleness? Or rather, Is it not a monstrous thing, that the mon-

ey, the dumb, inanimate metal should be active, and the man idle. Therefore, O man, thy money shall be thy judge. The brightness of the usurer's money shall be a witness against his idleness, as well as the rust of the covetous hoarders against them. If the money-man would turn his money, or part of it, into some kind of stock or other, and trade therewith, buy and sell, and maintain commerce in the world, he might serve the public good, and at least have the comfort of being an example of righteousness.

But still it will be pleaded, we need not work.

To which I answer; If the command of God make a necessity, all have need. Men should not be employed only to get wealth to themselves, but as members of the public, they ought to be doing some good. God never gave men estates to make them idle; neither do rents or riches exempt any man from business. It is a perverting of the end of talents, to wrap them up in napkins. No man need to complain for want of work, whilst there are so many businesses, besides worldly business, to keep men from being idle.

O eternal Spirit of life and power, inspire me with a divine activity, that I may account it nothing different from death to live unprofitably, nothing different from a judicial sentence, to bind myself hand and foot by my own slothfulness.

MEDITATION LV.

Of the love of ease.

Under the head of worldly pleasure, and as being much of kin to idleness, I must now meditate a while upon ease, carnal ease.

Idleness is opposed to action, ease to suffering. Idleness is freedom from business, ease is freedom from adversity, or any thing that is grievous to the senses, as sickness, losses, poverty, restraint, trespasses and injuries in word or deed, &c.

To prefer freedom from any of these sensual adversities, before submission to the will of God, a sanctified use and improvement of them, and the exercise of patience, charity, fortitude, and constancy under them, is sensual, and denominates a man a lover of the world, of worldly ease.

I do premise, (which every body knows,) that we are to value ourselves by our souls, not by our bodies, or secular concernments. And to prefer the body before the soul, is the same as to prefer the world before God. For that certainly is most to be loved and preferred, that makes most for the perfecting of the soul in a Christ-like nature. He that thinks himself too good to be laughed at, or spoken ill of, is a very proud Christian. To be unwilling to venture upon any affliction, to dare to venture nothing for truth's sake, not to take up any cross, is a character of a person far from true discipleship. For the true disciples are described, by their taking up their cross, and following their Lord.

The Captain of our salvation valued subjection to the will of God, and charity for the souls of men, before sensual ease; when these came in competition, he accounted him a devil, who cried, *Master, spare thyself.* It was indeed in his power to have spared himself; but he was an hardy Captain, and would not save himself, rather than deliver us.

It is true, nature desires ease from adversity; the soul has a wonderful sympathy with, and kindness for the body. But those soft and delicate persons that cannot endure that the flesh, or any fleshly interest should smart, though it be the will of the sovereign wise God, though this plaster might work a cure, though affliction might bring forth the pleasant fruits of righteousness, are strangely immured in flesh, and sunk into sense.

MEDITATION LVI.

Of fear of sickness.

Under this head of the love of ease, I may seasonably meditate of fear of sickness.

And here I cannot deny, but that sickness is troublesome to the senses; yea, I think I may confess, that the soul cannot but sympathize with the body; for there is a strange and unaccountable dearness which springs from their conjunction.

But yet the soul hath an health belonging to it distinct from the body, called in Scripture, *The*

spirit of a sound mind. The soul's ease and soundness lies in subjection to the will of God; she ought to value her own ease more than that of the body, to prefer patience before health or recovery.

We know that patience is divine, and that health is but a worldly good; and also that that may be wholsome to the soul, which is grievous to the senses.

So that to be afraid of, and to stand in awe of sickness, is a preferring of carnal ease before spiritual, and before the will of God; and to be more solicitous for recovery, than for a sanctification and improvement, is sensual.

Much more then, to fly to undue means for prevention, is a manifest preferring of the worldly, fleshly interest, before God and his holy authority.

It is possible, it is seemly, to be so influenced with the sense of the purity and perfection of the divine will, as to be well pleased with diseases, to overlook pain, to embrace a dunghill, to smile over the worms that fill our sores, as if they were our sister and mother.

Art thou so delicate a thing, O my body, that thou must not be touched? Are you, my senses, so sacred, that you must not be thwarted, nor your interest violated? Oh, take heed of the young man Absalom; though he be a traitor, a rebel, an incestuous fratricide, yet he is a handsome and proper gentleman, a goodly young prince; deal tenderly with him; yes, by all means. My soul thou hast smarted, and dost smart daily for the treacherousness and flattering

insinuations of the bodily senses; yea, they affect the dominion of the soul, and seek to dethrone reason. And must they be thus humoured and pleased? Ah! breed up a bird to pick out thy own eyes!

Lord, is it true that no sickness is joyous! But though sickness be not joyous, yet surely there may be joy in and under sickness, as well as in the spoil of goods, or in reproaches. And I do remember those that took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, and those that rejoiced that they were accounted worthy to suffer shame for the name of Jesus. Let me be lame all my days, and a cripple, if I may be the king's son, and eat at the king's table continually! Let me keep my bed all my days, if thou, Lord, wilt but please to make it, and thy holy Spirit will vouchafe to rest with me. Let the pleasure of submission, self-examination and resignation, out-weigh the pain of the gout or stone, or strangury?

If the devil meant it of all men indifferently without exception, good as well as bad, Job as well as other men, when he said, *All that a man hath will he give for his life;* he is a liar, and a slanderer, and divines do ill to justify the father of lies in this matter, and to say, as some do, That he was in the right. *All that a man hath?* What, think ye, he will give his soul to the devil for recovery from sickness, will he? He will part with his integrity, make shipwreck of a good conscience, he will curse God? Thou liest, Satan. Job himself proved thee a liar, who held fast his integrity, although thou movedst God against him to destroy him. And many of the servants of

God do confute thee, who have refused to accept of recovery from sickness upon sinful terms, or by sinful means; and instead of giving all that they have, soul and all, for life, would not part with the peace of their minds, not the purity of their consciences, to purchase health.

MEDITATION LVII.

O fear of the loss of friends.

Another thing grievous to the sensual life, is the death of friends, and beloved relations. This, I foresee, will fall under a subsequent meditation, therefore I will but lightly touch upon it here, although a fair opportunity be given for it.

It is the part of a delicate sensual soul, a lover of the world, to fear the removal of his dearest friends, to prefer their lives and company before the will of God, and its being done.

I do willingly grant that friends and relations are to be loved and delighted in; yea, I think of all the pleasures of the senses, this is the most innocent, and the least beastly, (though some beasts are very fond of their relations, and others are great lovers of society;) and good men have been more apt to fall into fits of this sensuality, than any other. Any one that reads the story of Jacob and Joseph, and Benjamin; of David and Absalom, and Adonijah, will be apt to think so. Nay, indeed it were a part of gross beastliness, not to leave off sorrowing for the asses, and cry, What shall I do for my son? Alas, lest the young man Saul should be lost!

Yet as relations are to be loved only in God, so they are readily to be quitted and forsaken for him, or at his command. His will ought to be dearer to us, than their company.

Many are so fond of their children, that they cannot abide to look off from them. They contemplate them by day, dream of them by night. This love, as great as it seems to be, is not perfect; for it hath fear in it, and this fear hath torment.

I will not here say how evil this love is, but I am sure these people are ill prepared, to forsake children for Christ's sake.

Abraham was not so fond of his only beloved Isaac. No, he shall die, if he were a thousand Isaacs, if God call for him. Nay, he shall die by his hands, rather than he will oppose the will of God.

Every good Christian is of the same temper, of the same predominant disposition, to be willing to give up Isaac. And no doubt, but that if we had the same command, the same thing would be our indispensable duty. But alas! *Quotusquisque est Abrahamus*, How few Abrahams does this age afford!

If we sit loose from husbands, wives, children, if we be in a chearful disposition to resign them at all times, it is an act of faith as acceptable as Abraham's. A man may offer up his son, though he do not bind him upon the altar, as there are many martyrs that were never brought to the stake. The three young men in Daniel were as properly martyrs, in venturing upon the fiery furnace, as if they had been burnt.

To mortify this worldly fear, let us believe and consider, That whatever is lovely in children will still live, and may be as well enjoyed in God, as if they were alive.

Besides, it is worth the while to ask, Who knows how those children will prove? If we had a prophet here, perhaps he would answer us as he did Eli, 1 Sam. ii. 33. *The child of thine that shall not be cut off, shall be to consume thine eyes, and to grieve thine heart.* But I shall wave the further prosecution of this, and postpone it, till I come to consider of the worldly love of persons.

MEDITATION LVIII.

Of the fear of poverty, and loss of goods.

Poverty is formidable to men, not so much (I suppose,) because it is deadly, (few fearing to be so poor as to starve,) as because of the disgrace that attends it.

Nil habet infœlix paupertas durius in se
Quam quod ridiculos homines facit.

[Poverty has nothing dreadful in itself; only as it makes men ridiculous.]

But this is a cross that we must be ready to take up, if we will approve ourselves to be lovers of God, disciples of Christ.

Moses took it up, and his countrymen the believing Hebrews took it up. Of latter times the noble Marquis Caraccioli took it up. It is a

tribulation, which all that will enter into the kingdom of God, must be content to pass through, if it lie in their way. To use sinful evasions or comply with sinful terms, to avoid poverty, denominates a lover of the world. Lord, what lying, flattering, deceiving, and disengenuous stifling of conscience is used, to prevent poverty! And is there any thing in it so formidable? May not a man be all that which is good and happy, and yet be poor? May he not be wise and poor, virtuous and poor, poor and blessed? *Blessed are the poor*, &c. Nay, are there not many immunities in poverty, a freedom from many temptations to pride, luxury and oppression, which do attend a rich condition? Are there not in it many advantages to virtue, humility, contempt of the world, dependence upon God, and thirsting after eternal life? But when I say, poverty hinders nothing in which riches can help us; a poor man may be as learned, valiant, virtuous, wise, yea, and as charitable too as the rich. It will be replied, Oh, but he cannot be so well esteemed. The poor is neglected and hated of his brethren; the poor man's wisdom is not regarded. I answer, No matter for that, if it deliver the city, regarded or not regarded. For what is the regard and valuation of men! This very respect to estimation, acceptance and honour, is one of the worldly lusts to be mortified, so far is it from being able to justify the worldly fear of poverty.

Blessed Jesus, who willingly becamest poor, to make me and many rich; thou hast taken the sting out of poverty; nay, thou hast sanctified, thou hast enriched it. Thou didst leave all to

come and seek me, make me willing to leave all to follow thee; make me able to follow thee, even in leaving all for thee!

MEDITATION LIX.

Of fear of persecution.

To be reluctant and delicate in venturing upon persecution, restraint, wrongs, for truth and the Gospel's sake; and to prefer deliverance from these, before the will of God, before a sanctified use of them, and exercise of grace under them, denominates a lover of the world.

Whosoever represents persecution (including the loss of estates, goods, good name, favour of the world, liberty of life,) to himself so formidable, as that, for fear of it, he will deliberately forsake God, deny his truth, profess error or falsehood, go contrary to, and continue in a contradiction to the known word of God, and the sentiments of his conscience, is a lover of the world.

Persecution is a cross that every faithful disciple of Christ must be ready to take up, whenever his Master calls him to it. Holy Paul was ready to take it up, in the whole weight of it, *not only to be bound at Jerusalem, but to die for the name of the Lord Jesus.* The believing Hebrews took it up. They might have escaped persecution, by denying Christ; but they were not so fickle, although they were but young Christians. They would not accept of deliverance, *Heb.* xi. 35.

And the same is the predominant temper of all the genuine disciples of Christ, *Whosoever will not forsake house and lands for my sake, is not worthy of me.*

Who would value a friend that would not encounter the least danger to help his friend? How would he then expose his life for him? Such professors Christ may well upbraid in the words of Absalom to Hushai, *Is this thy kindness to thy friend; why wentest thou not with thy friend?*

It is very observable how faithful worldly men are to their worldly designs and Delilahs. What pains does the mammonist voluntarily take; what diseases and dangers does the sensualist hazard; to what persecutions does the ambitious expose himself? These all take up their cross and follow their Delilah.

At what a chargeable and costly rate do giddy opinionists maintain error and humour, at the price of confiscation, and imprisonment and banishment. And will not the servants of truth be at as much charges for her? Are the children of this world not only wiser, but kinder than the children of light? Surely, if we were the children of wisdom, we should justify her, stand for her to the last drop of sweat, yea and of blood too.

I know no reason indeed nor revelation for the courting of persecution. But inasmuch as it must be the lot of all that will be godly, in one kind or degree or other, it is good to get our minds possessed with it, prepared for it, reconciled to it; that when it comes, we may not fly from the serpent, but take him by the tail, and he will turn into a rod in our hand.

If there be any excellency in righteousness, any thing desirable in blessedness, then surely there is some good, at least eventually, in persecution; for they are nearly related; *Blessed are they that are persecuted for righteousness, sake*, Mat. v. 10.

MEDITATION LX.

Of honour in general, and of pride.

The third of the things of the world, is its honours. A predominant lover of worldly honour, denominates a man a lover of the world, and consequently void of the love of God.

See how our Saviour opposes faith and ambition, making them inconsistent, John v. 44. *How can ye believe, that receive honour one of another?*

There is an honour which is not worldly, a praise that is of God, and not of man. This renders men, yea the meanest and obscurest of men, honourable, the excellent of the earth. And to be ambitious of it, is an argument of a truly heroic, and exalted mind; I mean to desire to be a son or a daughter of God.

An immoderate affectation of worldly honour, is pride; and to prefer it before innocence, to seek it, glory in it, maintain it, rather than truth and a good conscience, makes a lover of the world.

To have a right sense of one's own worth in any kind, is not pride, but justice. It is no man's perfection to be deceived, nor his duty to think

worse of himself than he is; for then he must needs think falsely; which is the infirmity of understanding; whose perfection it is to apprehend things as they are.

But there is less to be feared in this respect, less danger in it, than there is of an overweening attachment.

To expect a just estimation is but just, and modest enough, nay, sometimes laudable; for it may be very serviceable, and may make a man serviceable. So that every man may well be allowed to be tender of his reputation.

But yet patiently to bear disgrace, and not to repine at disappointment, is generous; and to go through bad report, is Christ-like.

To require, and exact a reverent behaviour from inferiors, is just; though oftentimes they that stand most severely upon it, miss of it most; respect being such a kind of thing, as often flies from him that follows it, and follows him that flies from it.

There are many objects of pride; such as birth, wit and learning, and standing, strength and power and victory, riches, interest, a party and the propagation of it, children, beauty, privileges, apparel, yea, even virtuous actions. To glory in any of these unduly, is pride, and denominates *a lover of the world.*

MEDITATION LXI.

Of the honour of God, and the way of seeking it.

God's glorifying himself is not such a thing as vain man's seeking to make himself great by selfish means. It is in short, the beaming forth of his own perfections, the displaying of himself, the communications of his own goodness.

Men's glorifying of God is not a fancying or speaking much of the glory of God; but it embraces a double notion.

The less proper notion, is the exalting of the name and honour of God, ascribing all good to him, owning him as the fountain of all. So we glorify him in the reverend thoughts that we have of him, in making honourable mention of him, dedicating things to his use and service. In this sense, Atheism and unbelief are dishonours to God; as also all taking his name in vain, swearing, spending all upon our lusts, &c.

The more proper notion is, the displaying of his perfections, imitating his goodness, justice, patience, mercy, charity; acting suitably to what his inimitable perfections do require; as submitting to his sovereignty, depending upon his omnipotence, behaving ourselves sincerely in the sense of his omniscience; observing such rules and measures in all our actions as make them agreeable to his holy will. In a word, our Saviour, who best knew his will, and who was so entirely devoted to it, who came into the world on this very errand, has more clearly and compendiously

told us what it is, John xv. 8. *Herein is my Father glorified, if ye bring forth much fruit.*

MEDITATION LXII.

Of self-honouring.

Man was not made for himself. However common a thing it is, it is low and base for man to make himself his own end.

There is nothing more absurd or unreasonable than pride; nothing more excellent or honourable than humility. It is truly said, *Quo minus sibi arrogat homo, eo evadit clarior et nobilior*, Man does most honour himself by debasing himself; and so on the contrary. And as there is nothing more absurd, so there is nothing more dangerous. It were ten thousand times more safe to stand in the front of the hottest battle, than that God should set himself in battle array against us; and yet that is the import of that phrase, *He resisteth the proud.*

There is pride in unbelief, and refusing the terms of the Gospel. *The wicked, through the pride of his heart, seeketh not after God.* Yea, indeed, pride seems to be the cause of all disobedience; *If ye will not hear*, says the prophet, *my soul shall weep in secret places for your pride.*

To seek the advancement of our names, our own credit and estimation, more than the name of God, is worldly. *Come, see my zeal for the Lord*, says Jehu. There lies more emphasis on the word *my* than on *the Lord.* How this should

be pardonable in men, I know not, when it is no less than treason in an ambassador of a king.

Hezekiah was guilty of this when he made a show of his treasures; and David, when he numbered the people; with both of whom God was displeased. But the one humbled himself for the pride of his heart; the other repented, and called himself a fool; yet neither escaped punishment.

The church did not so, *Not unto us, Lord, not unto us*, &c. Christ Jesus, the Head of the church, did not so; he sought not his own honour, but his Father's. The church triumphant do not so; they cast down their crowns before the throne. Do not thou so, O my soul; *for what hast thou that thou hast not received?*

MEDITATION LXIII.

Concerning the seeking of the approbation of men, more than of God.

To prefer the applause of men before the acceptance of God, is to prefer a great name before a good conscience; and consequently the world before God; the good word of the world, before the good will of our heavenly Father.

It is impossible to act sincerely in any thing, and to do that which is right and good, if we intemperately seek or thirst after the applause of men, if we love the praise of men more than the praise of God; for this will corrupt the judgment, dispense with sins as if they were not sins,

and divert the mind from truth and rectitude. When Saul had more mind to humour the people than to approve himself to God as his executioner of the Amalekites, we see how it perverted his administration, and caused him to spare that which God had condemned.

Men are incompetent judges. They cannot discern the heart, nor its integrity.

And the approbation of men is at best but filthy, and not fit for any wise man to estimate himself by. Alas! What profits it? It makes no man the better man; yea, it often hinders them from being so good as they might.

Oftentimes it is false. For those things that are highly esteemed in the sight of men, are abominable before God.

It is always fickle and uncertain. The good word of men is soon lost. He that is exalted to be a king to-day, shall be voted to the cross tomorrow. Paul and Barnabas, that are this hour cried up for gods, the next must die like men, and be stoned like the vilest of men. Every man is subject to error and mistake; and he that once mistakes, forfeits all his reputation for wisdom; he that once sins, destroys all the good name that he had got, as Solomon assures us, Eccl. ix. 18. *One sinner destroyeth much good;* and explains it well in the following verse, *Dead flies cause the ointment of the apothecary to send forth a stinking savour; so doth a little folly him that is in reputation for wisdom and honour.*

O my soul, study to approve thyself to God, the Searcher of hearts, who judgeth righteous judgment, by whose judgment thou must stand or fall at the last.

For dost thou not know that the ill opinion of men is one of the crosses that thou must take up?

And why shouldest thou covet that which makes thee miserable, that is declared a wo unto thee? Wouldest thou have all men to speak well of thee? And dost thou believe it can be done without a wo? *Wo unto you when all men speak well of you.*

Art thou better than thy Saviour, who suffered himself to be contradicted by sinners, and endured their contradictions against himself?

Lord, though I may not expect a voice from heaven, saying, *Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased*, yet let me hear the voice of thy Spirit, witnessing with my spirit, that I do always the things that please thee! And then, though the earth murmur, and the great waters roar, there will be a calm within. Oh blessed calm, like that of the upper regions, which the winds and clouds, and vapours below cannot infest or disturb!

MEDITATION LXIV.

Of pride in birth.

To be proud of, and glory in our descent and parentage, is to be a lover of the world.

If it be asked, who these are that are proud of their birth? I confess I cannot tell how many are guilty, but I conclude that the following are:

Those that prefer being sons of princes before being sons of God.

Those that glory more that they are born of noble parents than of Christian parents.

Those that value their birth so highly, that they think religion to be below them, or a disparagement to their quality.

Those that undervalue holy bishops or pastors, or any other holy men, in their hearts, because they were not born gentlemen.

Those that esteem men because of their birth, and prefer nobility before virtue; in whose eyes not the vile are contemned, but the poor are vile.

The apostle James was no Quaker, and yet he accounted it carnal to prefer a gentleman in affection, or at least in judgment, before a meaner man. We receive only our bodies from our parents; our better part is the noblest, as being immediately from God; and so a beggar, (if the denomination be taken from the nobler part,) may well enough be said to be noble.

How can any man be proud that he is descended of an ancient family; that he is the thousandth from Inachus, or the Etrurian kings? The original of all men is the same; and if we reckon right, the beggar is as well descended from the beginning as the prince. Oh what a cause of boasting it is, "I and my ancestors have dwelt in this house, and been owners of this estate so many hundred years!" When, perhaps, every bat, or owl, or swallow, may say as much of their wall, or barn, or chimney.

Oh but the family has always been noble and honourable. Doubtless within a few generations, some or other of them have been deformed, or vicious, or cowards, or fools, or traitors, or idola-

ters, or factious. Nay, do but look into the present generation, and those that are at present alive of the same family, and one may well reckon with the Italians, That he that hath neither rogue, nor harlot, nor beggar, of his kindred, was born of a flash of lightning.

But suppose all this; what cause of pride have I in it? Am I really the better, or the more honourable for what others have been or done? *Quæ non fecimus ipsi vix ea nostra voco*, [Those things which were not done by us, I scarcely call ours.]

Or what thank is it to me that out of my first nothing I sprung up in this place, rather than in another; that I crept into the world a wretched infant by this crevice, rather than by that?

I was so far from being called to counsel, to choose of what womb I would be born, or what body I would animate, that I knew not so much as how I came into the world; and am more beholden to my mother's midwife for my nobility, than to myself, or any thing that I could contribute.

Wretched man! Dost thou not believe such plain and easy things as these? And yet, shall neither philosophers and poets laugh thee out of thy folly, nor divinity reform thee?

Blessed God, the Father of lights, and the Fountain of honour, let me esteem it most noble to be akin to thee, and to be like thee!

MEDITATION LXV.

Of pride in beauty.

That pride in beauty does denominate a lover of the world, I suppose nobody will deny; but the great inquiry will be, who they are that are proud of it?

I will venture to answer negatively:

Not they that pray for perfect, healthful, comely children.

Nor they that esteem a comely proportion and just symmetry of parts, an ornament and a blessing of God.

Nor they that endeavour moderately and justly to rectify deformities, to preserve beauty, or to improve it.

But to speak affirmatively: All that prefer beauty before virtue, modesty, chastity, and esteem it higher than these, either in themselves or others, are lovers of the world.

Those that prefer it in themselves, are such as seek the beautifying, adorning, and recommending of the body, more than the adorning of the mind with virtue, or the life with good manners.

Such as use undue means to recommend beauty, either too costly or too splendid, or spend excessive time in setting it off, more than in dressing the inward man.

Such as set off beauty for sinful and carnal ends, to dazzle unwary eyes, and captivate wanton minds, as tradesmen keep a gloss upon their

goods, the better to expose them to sale. And what do many fair ladies do, but pay homage to themselves, and worship their own faces; who stand gazing from hour to hour in their glasses, and cannot be got from them, any more than Ovid's Narcissus from the Fountain.

Those that prefer beauty in others, are such as esteem a fair woman, before a discreet; an handsome before an honest.

The fairest souls do not always inhabit the finest bodies. *Ingenium Galbæ male habitabat,* [the soul of Galba had a poor habitation.] The best guests are not always lodged in the best rooms. What a deformed, lustful, murderous, ambitious, rebellious soul dwelt in the body of Absalom, in which there was no blemish!

Beauty is very dangerous, and a great snare; *Rara est concordia formæ, atque pudicitiæ;* It is hard to be fair and chaste.

Be sure it is fading; it needs nothing, but its very being, to destroy it. *Dum contemplamur, corrumpimus;* whilst we dote upon it, we destroy it. Vain mortal! Wouldst thou contemplate thy beauty to the best advantage? Go then, view thy face in the next fair rose, or tulip, or lily, that thou meetest with; those will best represent thee.

Such flowers, which in the morning gay and fine,
Rise with the sun, and mount their heads,
But noon once past, look down upon their beds,
And tow'rd the earth their grave, with him at night decline.

And oh! Where is that beautiful woman to be found, that values herself more by her faith, than by her face; by her good manners, more than by her good features; who sometimes views herself in her glass, but always in God, who is unspotted beauty; who stands in awe of every thing that may defile her soul, more than of the small pox, or a leprosy; who, although this body in its complexion and features, be more lovely than her neighbour's, yet despises it, in comparision of the more glorious body; and desires to put off this, that she may put on that? Poor Lucretia abhorred her own beauty, and life too, when her chastity was violated. But how many ladies have we, that therefore especially prize their beauty, because it qualifies them the more to be unchaste.

MEDITATION LXVI.

Of pride in apparel.

From the body I descend to the clothes, by which to value one's self, is the meanest and most paltry sort of pride that can be. He that values himself by his body, values himself by something that is part of himself; but he that values himself by his clothes, values himself by a mean thing, that is perfectly extrinsic to him, and nothing at all related to him:

But the inquiry, is, What is this pride in apparel?

Negatively, It is not to wear good clothes, nor handsome ones, nor fashionable ones, nor costly ones, suitable to one's quality and estate.

Nor is it to be careful of them, to preserve them from injury.

Nor is it to express the extraordinary festivity of our minds by extraordinary apparel.

But it is pride in apparel, To prefer apparel before health and modesty, as naked necks and breasts do. Though indeed I know not well which to call this, pride in apparel, or in want of it.

To prefer apparel before charity, and the clothing of the naked, is an undue valuation of it.

To value ourselves by our apparel, to fancy ourselves the better men for it, or to design that others should so esteem us, as it seems Herod and Haman did, is gross pride in apparel; *Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delighteth to honour.* A proud fool! Is there so much honour in a suit of fine clothes? He might have thought of twenty more estimable pieces of honour than that.

But there may be as great a piece of pride as any of these, in an affected plainness and meanness, and unfashionableness of apparel. To design that men should estimate our humility by this, is as proud a part as the Pharisees' desiring to recommend their worth and learning by their long robes. To put on plain cloth instead of humility is deceitful, a bad exchange, somewhat like an image with a pillow of goat's hair, instead of David.

Men may go in sheep's clothing, plain and homely; and yet be inwardly proud and haughty. This seems to be a worse pride than the former,

because it adds hypocrisy to it. What wise or good man, can value himself by that, wherein many rogues, and harlots, yea, and heathen, yea and birds, and beasts, and flowers, do match and excel him?

To make gay apparel stand instead of true nobleness, and excellence of mind, or homely apparel instead of true humility of mind, is a proud superstition, only suitable to worldly minds. A deceitful kind of metonymy in manners, putting the sign for the thing signified.

To affect bravery in apparel, for the recommendation of beauty, or ostentation of riches, is a mean, and oftentimes a deceitful policy. Plain beauties are the loveliest to uncorrupted eyes; and excessive finery serves rather to make people poor, than to prove them rich.

Lord what a wicked thing is man; to make his shame his glory; to make that his pride, which ought to serve for his humiliation; to make that fuel for his lust, which was at first a punishment for his lusting!

MEDITATION LXVII.

Of pride in children.

To glory in children, or to prefer them before God, before the image of God in them, or the will of God in removing them, is worldly.

To glory in their persons, parts, or number, more than in their virtuous qualifications, or dutiful behaviour. What a wicked woman was that,

who was content her son should be a murderer, if he might be an emperor; *occidat modo imperet*, [let him kill, provided he may but rule.] To glory in the propagation and perpetuation of our names by children, is foolish and unreasonable. Virtue gives a better name, than posterity; and to the virtuous, God will give a name, *better than of sons and of daughters;* Isa. lvi. 5.

To depend upon the provision that by them is made for old age, more than upon the providence and promises of God, is carnal and profane. This comfort is very uncertain. True, indeed, children are accounted the staff of old age; but sometimes God beats men with these staves, instead of supporting them thereby; as he did Eli, Samuel and David.

I know that multitudes of children were promised under the law, and valued as a great blessing; a blessing wonderfully coveted by men, and more by women. Abraham seems to have a mind of an heir; *what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless?* Gen. xv. 2. But his grand-daughter Rachel was too, too passionate; *Give me children or I die.*

The women accounted it a great reproach to be barren; that is very plain. And it is conjectured that they still hoped that the Messiah might spring of their line. Whether that be true or no I know not; but I think it was no such great matter, if he did, as some would make it. For I observe that Christ after the flesh sprung from some of the most infamous families; as of Pharez, a child of incest; and of Rahab, an harlot.

I observe also that some of the greatest favourites of Heaven wanted this blessing of nume-

rous offspring. Abraham, the friend of God, left behind him but one (Isaac) of the promised seed. Moses, the man of God, had a family indeed; but I think if we consult the genealogies, it was one of the least of the families of Israel. And as for the Gospel, to say no more, I am sure it is very sparing of this kind of blessings.

To be proud of children, is very silly and unreasonable upon many accounts. More grief and vexation is usually brought to people by their children, than by any other cause. Besides, they are begotten and born at uncertainty; who knows, what wise man knows whether he shall be a wise man or a fool that succeeds him? It seems by Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, that wisdom does not always run in the blood; and I think Solomon himself alluded to this son of his, *Eccles.* ii. 18, 19.

But suppose they do prove good, and wise, and virtuous, How can the virtues of children any way redound to their parents, more than the parent's virtue can redound to the honour of the children? A tutor may more reasonably glory than a parent.

If thou be good, thou wilt glory in God, and not in thy good children; if thou be wicked, thy good children are a shame to thee, and not a glory.

Lord, What an unreasonable thing is it, that children who were given to draw the minds of men to thee, in whom they may read thy image, should be so abused, as to draw away their hearts from thee, whilst men use them only as looking-glasses, to reflect their own image!

MEDITATION LXVIII.

Of pride in wit and learning.

Understanding and knowledge may justly, I think, challenge to itself the place of the highest natural perfection.

But to glory in knowledge and learning, more than in God that gives them, and more than in the end for which they serve, will denominate a lover of the world.

They are proud of their wit and learning, who ascribe their wit to themselves, their learning to their own study, ingenuity and industry, and not to the blessing of God. If Heriod had in a sober sense said of his eloquent oration, It is the eloquence of God, and not of man, he had said true; but to suffer the people to say so, in a base flattery, and to make himself the God, was proud and atheistical.

They are so that will not submit their wisdom to the wisdom of God, that will believe nothing, but what their reasons can fathom; the wise Greeks, the Scribes, and disputers of this world.

They are so that use their wit and learning to maintain error, to justify falsehood; especially they that are learned to dispute against God, and wise to prate against wisdom itself.

It is very much to the disparagement of learning, and may serve for the humbling of the learned, that oftentimes the best artists are the worst men, and so sometimes are the greatest clerks.

However, It is certain that wisdom and learning are as dear to the animal life, as the divine;

yea, and that the devil himself is as good a scholar as the best of us all.

To this head may be reduced a generation of fools, who although they do not excel, nor indeed match their neighbours in art or learning, do yet glory in their standing, and in the advantage that they have had to know more than others, though they know not so much. These think to conciliate authority to their discourse, not by its strength, but their own standing; not by their being wiser, but older than other men. Cicero jeers his son Mark, that he was of a year's standing under Cratippus, and that at Athens, and yet was not a good philosopher. How much more shameful is it for them who are of twenty or forty years standing in the university, to be inferior in learning to many that were never there. To think to make ourselves or our discourses seem wiser or weightier, merely by reason of our age or education, is a most pedantic piece of pride. As old age is no otherwise honourable, than as it is found in a way of righteousness; so neither is standing, otherwise than in conjunction with a proportionable understanding.

MEDITATION LXIX.

Of pride in riches.

Confidence and affiance is one species of pride in riches; but this I met with fitly under another head, therefore I will think no more of it here.

To be content with what we have, is no piece of pride in itself. Though he was a proud worldling, who bid his heart be merry, because he had goods laid up for many years; yet it was a good saying of a bad man, *I have enough, my brother.*

There may indeed be pride in refusing presents; but it is not simply a piece of pride, no, nor folly neither, to refuse them. Balaam was proud enough; but I do not take it to be any part of his pride, to refuse the preferments offered him by the king of Moab. Who dare censure Abraham of pride, though he speaks much like a gentleman to the king of Sodom, *Gen.* xiv. 23. and swears *that he would not take from a thread to a shoe-latchet, lest he should say, I have made Abraham rich?* Or Elisha either, though a poorer man than he, who obstinately refused to receive any gift at the hand of the Syrian prince?

But to bless ourselves secretly in riches, and think ourselves better men than our neighbours, or indeed at all really valuable for them, is pride, and an undue estimation of riches. And thus I suspect, some of the plainest and obscurest men are the proudest.

Much more is it pride to make ostentation of riches, either in words by bragging of them, or in deeds, by pompous buildings, gaudy apparel, or the like. Yea, possibly there may be a proud ostentation even in founding churches, hospitals, and alms-houses. Come, see my charity to the Lord and to his poor, sounds as suspiciously, as, *Come, see my zeal.*

But of all ostentation, it is most odiously foolish, for a man to bring his estate, as an argument for

his opinion or party, or the goodness of either. And to bring riches and worldly prosperity as an argument of the special love of God, is next to blasphemy; as if we thought God to be altogether such an one as ourselves. From this false conceit perhaps it is, that men grown rich from mean beginnings, are most apt to be proud; but when they are, they are most ridiculous. *This fellow came in but yesterday, and he will needs be a judge.*

To ascribe our riches to our own care or industry, or ingenuity, so as to exclude the providence of God, or not to allow it the highest place, is carnal. We know indeed that God gives riches usually in a way of ingenious industry, and men of understanding usually have bread; and to know that God has given us riches in a way of industry, is but just.

But yet we must think withal,

First, That it was he that gave that ingenuity, and enabled to that industry. *It is God*, saith the prophet, *that instructeth even the husbandman to discretion*, Isa. xxviii. 26. See also *Deut.* viii. 18. especially.

Secondly, That there is not such a necessary conjunction between these things and riches, but that they are often disappointed; it is the blessing of God only that makes them successful, that makes men rich; without which, μηδὲν ἰσχύει πόνος [labour is of no avail.] So that to ascribe to ourselves, and exclude that particular and powerful providence, is gross and carnal.

Lord, What have I, but what I have received? Thou art the great householder, that givest

to all the members of thy family their several portions, to one more, to another less; and which of them may boast over another, or how dare any of them boast against thee? And why should I glory in a thing that is extrinsic to me, a separable adjunct, that may be, and yet I be never the better; or may not be, and I be never the worse? Nay, in a thing that many enjoy, and yet are really very contemptible and hateful, whom I myself do not think ever the better for them? And why should we admire and value ourselves for those things, for which we do not value other men?

MEDITATION LXX.

Of pride in strength.

To be proud of our strength and power, denominates us lovers of the world.

They are proud of their strength, who glory in it distinct from the Almighty; that glory in it, as if they had girded themselves with strength.

That make ostentation of their strength in words, as the Philistine boaster did; or in deeds, using the utmost strength for accomplishing a small matter; as if a king should raise a mighty army of horse and foot to hunt flies, or catch partridges.

To make laws about trivial matters, more for ostentation of one's authority, than for the establishment of any thing that is really good, is ridiculous, and an abuse of power.

To eat, or drink, or fight for wagers; to get one another's money, or to make others sport, is

something worse than a beast would do; it approaches to the barbarous custom of the heathen Roman gladiators, who killed one another, for a pastime to the people.

To abuse power to oppression, is like the lion in the fable. One part of the prey is mine, because I am the worthiest; another is mine, because I took most pains in hunting; and if ye will not give me the third, try for it who dare.

To ascribe victory to one's own arm, to the arm of flesh, is to be proud of one's strength. How unseemly these brags are, we may see in the Assyrian monarch, and how God took him up for his pride, and presently took him down too, 2 *Kings* xix. I wish these self-confidents would consider, that it is God alone who girdeth with strength; he often baffles the strength of the strongest, and that by despicable means; as he chastised the monstrous Goliah by a shepherd's boy.

God requires that our strength be employed for him; that it be laid out in maintenance of the truth, in defence of the weak and helpless.

He has charged us against this wickedness expressly by the prophet, *Let not the strong man glory in his strength*, Jer. ix. 23.

And how ridiculous a thing is it, for a man to be proud of that, wherein his horse or his ox excels him, more than he excels a child? Is a man mighty to eat, or to drink? And is not a beast more? For who can eat like the behemoth, or drink like leviathan?

Lord, strengthen me with might in my inner man, that I may obtain the victory over principalities and powers; triumph over the powers

of hell and darkness, the devil, and my lusts! As for bodily strength, endow me with so much as may serve to make me useful, and give me grace to use it in thy service, never glorying in that, which, before I am well aware, will be turned into weakness and rottenness!

MEDITATION LXXI.

Of pride in privileges.

There are indeed spiritual privileges belonging to the saints, wherein they may well glory; yet so, as it be in Christ only, and not in themselves. Who can but glory in the relation of a son or daughter of God, of an heir of the kingdom, of an interest in all the promises of the Gospel, of free access unto the throne of grace, and entertainment there; in an interest in the prayers of the faithful, especially in the intercession of the blessed Mediator? These are privileges more noble than the most princely; in which no man can rejoice or glory too much, except he can rejoice with a joy greater than unspeakable.

But there are privileges in which it is easy and usual to rejoice and glory excessively and carnally. I have already insisted upon pride in parentage and education. That which I fix my thoughts upon here is church privileges, or the privilege of being in covenant with God, as all the members of the visible church are.

I take all that are admitted into the church, and have taken upon them the profession of the

Gospel, in opposition to Jews and heathens, to be in covenant. But to them that are faithful in covenant, and answer the terms of it, to them only it is advantageous to salvation; to the rest, an high aggravation of their condemnation and sin.

It is doubtless a great mercy to be born within the pale of the church, taken into the number of its members, to sit under the sound of the Gospel; because it is the ordinary means of men's conversion to God, and the road that leads to the church above. But yet to be within the pale of the church, and not be of the little flock, to be a member of the church, and yet a rotten and corrupt one; to be a branch in Christ that bringeth forth no fruit, to live under the sound of the Gospel, and in the mean time the Gospel to be no more than an empty sound to men; how little matter of glory is in all this!

And yet, how do the generality of men glory in these privileges, rather than in the answer of a good conscience; in a form of godliness, rather than in the power of it? These are the lovers of the world and carnal.

How impudently did the Jews glory in their father Abraham, the law, the temple, their circumcision and sacrifices; when in the mean time, they were strangers to the faith and obedience of Abraham; broke and made void the law; refused to make their souls the temple of God; were uncircumcised in heart; would not hearken to God's voice, which is better than sacrifice, and more acceptable than the fat of lambs?

And is it not as usual, is it not as unreasonable, is it not as impudent, to glory in the profession of

the Gospel, and yet reject the terms of it; to be proud of being baptized into the name of Christ, and utterly refuse to be baptized into the Spirit of Christ? Shall a dog brag of his communion with the family, and his membership, because he lies by the fire, as the children do, or eats part of the same bread that they eat? But who are proud of their church privileges? All that value themselves and their Christianity by these. All that bless themselves in the font, and in the altar; whilst they are not at all washed from their sins, neither know what communion with God in the Spirit, with Christ in his graces, means. Who take up their rest in these, not seeing any necessity of regeneration, or thinking the baptismal one to be sufficient. That boast that they are not excommunicated from the society of the saints upon earth, when they stand excommunicated from the inheritance of the saints in light; that make more reckoning that they are Protestants, than that they are converts. They are Protestants; they understand by this no more, but that they are not Papists; nor no more by that than that they come to church. And is not this a great matter to be proud of? To glory in this, and rest here, is notorious hypocrisy and carnality.

Lord, pity the deluded and mistaken multitude, who come and sit before thee as thy people, but their hearts are not with thee; these run after their covetousness, their pride, their revenge, and luxury!

MEDITATION LXXII.

Of pride in power and great place.

To prefer power and advancement, an high and honourable station in the world, before God, before truth, and a good conscience, is to be a lover of the world. It will be asked, Who do so? I answer, They that climb up to preferment by undue means, by injustice, flattery, by sinful compliance with the guise of a corrupt age, or that swim to a throne in a sea of innocent blood.

They that insinuate themselves into the favour of great men, by administering to their lusts, and procuring fuel thereunto, by humouring them in their unlawful desires, by commending them for nothing, or for that which is naught. It is impossible to reckon up all the follies, falsities, flatteries, lyings, dissemblings, detractions, and backbitings, calumnies, cruelties, omissions, which are the by-ways that the lover of the world uses in order to preferment. The most of these we find exemplified in Absalom and Hazael affecting the crowns of Israel and Syria. Nay, they that play at a smaller game than crown-catching, will not hesitate at such sinful methods, as appears by the story of Zibah. And indeed it is impossible for a man that intemperately thirsts after the favour of great men, to be innocent; he must either do what he should not, or basely neglect to do what he should.

The king of Moab jeered the foolish prophet, because the Lord had kept him from honour.

Lord, If thou keep me from honour, if thou interpose and stand in my way, that I cannot get to honour but by dishonouring thee, and violating thy authority, let me account it a blessed disappointment; nay, let me account it a singular honour to me, to be so addicted to thee and thy commands, to the seeking of thy face and favour, as that, in comparison thereof, I can despise the favour of men, of the greatest of men! For what will the favour of great men signify, in comparison of the acceptance of the great God?

MEDITATION LXXIII.

Of pride in virtuous actions.

To speak properly, that is not a virtuous action, nor a religious duty, which a man is proud of; for it is necessary to a virtuous action, that it be done to the glory of God, and not for self-exaltation.

But we may call many actions or duties religious, in contradistinction from civil; and many of those religious duties, in this sense, may be as irreligious as any other. If a man preach, or pray, or hear, or receive the sacrament, to commend himself to men, for the advancement of his own name and interest, or the augmentation of his own estate, he is as carnal in those actions as in any civil actions whatsoever. Jeroboam's setting up a worship, (though it had not been idolatrous,) merely to strengthen his kingdom, would have been carnal; for if self be the highest end,

it denominates the action selfish; be it civil or religious, it matters not.

But there is yet a more mysterious and spiritual piece of pride, when men do virtuous actions ultimately for good ends, and yet, when they have done, take an unholy pleasure in them, and bless themselves in the performance. The devil will be ready, if he cannot get us to be so gross as directly to seek ourselves in performing these duties, to tempt us to feel ourselves in the performance, and to set the crown upon our own heads.

I speak not of that gross way of glorying in our own good works, or making ostentation of them, which is palpable to every ordinary discerner; but that secret kind of self-applauding, or self-feeling, which is contrary to that self-nothingness and exinanition, of which Christ Jesus was the pattern.

To rejoice and glory in God purely and only, and be nothing in our own eyes; to be perfectly emptied of self, and wholly swallowed up in God, is a high attainment; and yet it is predominantly the desire and design of all truly renewed souls.

Oh Lord, thou art all things, I am nothing; thou art the giver of all grace, the ocean from which all excellencies do flow, and into which they ought to return. Let me not feel myself, but thee in my best actions! Let me be so far from contriving the advancement of my own sorry name in any good action, as that I may not without displeasure so much as hear myself commended or spoken well of for it; that I may not

commit a sacrilege upon thine honour, though it be ever so secret, and that there be no danger of being arraigned in man's court for this theft; but may live in the exercise of self-emptying, self-humbling, continually! Grant that I may look upon thee, not under any particular and limited notion, but as being the universal Goodness, Truth, Life and Love; and may view myself, not as any thing distinct from thee, but in thee! That I may sink into nothing, and be swallowed up in thee, the infinite abyss of all perfection! Amen.

MEDITATION LXXIV.

Of pride in worldly interest, and a party.

Near of kin to pride of power and preferment, is that carnal disposition of seeking one's worldly interest and grandeur, and preferring a party, or the advancement of it, before the propagation of the Gospel, and the advancement of true godliness in the world.

Some men have so espoused a party, and are so addicted to a way, that nothing must stand before it. All that they can wrap and wring is little enough to sacrifice to this Bel. This must be carried on, let peace or purity stand or fall, let the Gospel itself sink or swim.

The faith delivered to the saints does challenge indeed our zeal, and we are required to contend earnestly for it; but for the Pharisees to contend so vehemently for the tradition of the fathers, which were not contained in the law,

was a mad and carnal zeal, notorious hypocrisy; especially when, in the mean time, they neglected the weightier matters of the law.

To prefer the advancement of a party, or a worldly interest, which God hath not consecrated, before peace, order, unity, before the propagation of the Gospel, the advancement of true godliness, and the salvation of men's souls, is to be a predominant lover of the world. To say, *I am of Paul, and I am of Apollos*, in contradistinction from Christ, is carnal, says Paul himself. And he was a competent judge; for he himself, whilst unconverted, was unreasonably and fiercely devoted to a party. But behold the vast difference between carnal Saul and regenerate Paul; compare *Acts* xxii. 3—5. with *Phil.* i. 15—18.

But who may be thought to be guilty of this foul fault? And what is it to be proud of worldly interest?

I answer, To be so addicted to an interest or party, as to prefer the prosecution of it before the exercise of justice, charity, or mercy; to violate any man's right to establish our own party.

To prefer it before the exercise of charity; to think that every man must needs be exclaimed against, excommunicated, forbidden, that follows not our way. This Christ condemns in as plain words as if he should say, Let them preach the Gospel, let them cast out devils; I will not forbid them, though they do not follow me. The apostle Paul cried, Let them preach in God's name, though they do not say, We are of Paul, *Phil.* i. 18. and I suppose Cephas was of the same mind.

To prefer it before mercy. What, must all the world rather go to wreck, than our own Diana should be spoken against? Must every man be stretched longer or cut shorter, that will not exactly fit our bed? Must they be accounted not worthy to live that do not live just as we do? If God will have mercy rather than sacrifice, then surely much rather than ceremonies that are not of his appointing. It was fit indeed that the interest of Egypt should be maintained, but it was not fit that the Israelitish children should be drowned, to keep it from sinking.

To be so addicted to an interest, as to use and encourage undue instruments in the prosecution of it; to make priests of the lowest of the people, to strengthen the party, with Jeroboam; to make unlawful matches or leagues to strengthen a kingdom, with Asa the king of Judah, and Jehoshaphat his son, both sharply reproved for it by Hanani and Jehu, the father and son, 2 *Chron.* xvi. 7. and xix. 2.

To make laws on purpose to make men offenders. One party, by an ordinance, exclude all from their employment, that will do thus and thus; another, succeeding, exclude all that will not. Good God! It is not divine truth and charity, but human interest, that governs the world. When shall we leave off judging one another, but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling block in his brother's way! It seems to be a bold thing for any party of men to make the terms of communion straiter than Christ Jesus made them. Must all the children be cast out of the family that are not of the same shape and

stature? Shall the mother refuse to nurse the child that does not exactly resemble her? If it resemble the father it is a sufficient argument of its being legitimate; nay, those are accounted more legitimate than the other. It is no good maxim in divinity, *Partus sequitur ventrem*, [the offspring follows the mother.]

To admit of sin for political ends; as either to oppress and impoverish a people, to keep them peaceable, as the king of Egypt did; or to hoodwink the people, and keep them in ignorance, that they may the more absolutely depend on the judgment of their dogmatical guides, as that church does that is *spiritually called Egypt.* Such a kind of carnal wisdom is it to tolerate profaneness, to prevent faction; to pull down pulpits, for fear of sedition; or schools, for fear of controversies.

Who can sufficiently lay to heart the miseries and mischiefs which self-interest hath brought on the world! How many lives have been sacrificed to the interest of a triple crown! It was said once, *Quantum lucri attulit ista fabula Christi!* [How much gain has that fable of Christ produced!] Nay, but, *Quantas strages et cædes ista fabula Papæ!* [How great desolation and slaughter have flowed from that fable of the Pope!]

In short, he that forbids a man to cast out devils, merely because he is not of his party, and follows not him, prefers the devil before God; and if that be not idolatry, then I think there is none in Matt. iv. 9. *Fall down and worship me.* One would think an hearty enemy to Satan's kingdom, (such as Christ Jesus was,) should al-

most do and suffer any thing in order to the subversion of that kingdom, the dispossession of unclean spirits; I mean the conversion and salvation of precious souls.

Do I look upon it as an unworthy act in Jonah to prefer his own reputation, and the credit of his own prophesy, before the repentance of the Ninevites; and shall I dare to prefer my own interest, or the credit of my own party or opinion, before the salvation of souls? Do I look upon it as a carnal part of Joshua, to prefer the interest of his master Moses, before the edification of the Lord's congregation; and shall I dare to prefer the interest of any, though they sit in Moses' chair, before the good of souls?

Good Lord, grant that I may have no interest but the interest of truth, righteousness, peace, purity; Oh how infinitely more worthy to be advanced is the interest of Christ than our own sorry name! Lord, come and take up the highest room and place in my heart, that I may prefer the glory of thy name, the exercise of grace, the advancement of truth, the propagation of the Gospel, the welfare of souls, before my chiefest joys, my dearest interests! And Oh, that thou wouldest mightily prevail in the hearts of all men; that whether they sit in Moses' chair, they may be of Moses' temper, wishing that all the Lord's people were prophets; or whether they be apostolical men, they may resemble the great apostle of the Gentiles, who rejoiced, and was resolved to rejoice, that Christ was preached, though the preachers designed thereby to derogate from his fame, and to eclipse it; or wheth-

er they be private Christians, they may follow Christ, who would not forbid them that showed compassion to men, and opposed the common enemy, although they followed not him! Oh how sweetly do these great and holy persons conspire with one another in the same pure and public spirit! And Oh, would to God we all may conspire with them!

MEDITATION LXXV.

Of self-love.

After the things of the world, come to be considered the persons thereof.

If any man prefer any person in the world before God, *the love of God is not in him.* The world loveth its own persons, as well as things.

The persons may be divided into one's self, one's relations, and other men.

First, Of self-love.

Self-love is directly contrary to the love of God; and where it is predominant, does exclude it.

I have partly prevented myself in many things, that might be reduced to this head.

Self is the great centre of all worldly men, insomuch that sin seems to be nothing else but the sinking down of the soul from God into self.

It is an instance of predominant self-love, to stand viewing and admiring our own particular being, as something distinct from the unbounded essence of God, and independent on him; or to

seek its gratification without any reference to the Supreme Being, endeavouring ultimately to accommodate it with something, that shall no way redound to him.

To dote on our own perfections, as if they were the distinct excellencies of our own beings, and not communications from God.

To allow that in ourselves, which we condemn in others of the same circumstances with ourselves.

To love our lives in opposition to, in competition with, in a way of separation from God, I have already considered. There is yet somewhat higher.

A man may be guilty of an unchaste love of his own soul, as the Stoics with their *ἀυτάρκεια*, their self-sufficiency, proudly magnifying the excellency of their own souls, and their own sufficiency, at least in a way of independence on God, if not in opposition to him. What mean else those great brags, *Sapiens contendet cum ipso Jove de fœlicitate*, [A wise man may contend with God himself for happiness;] and the strange encomiums that they give to their wise man, *Compar deorum, deorum conviva*, [An equal with the gods, a companion of the gods,] and the like?

The Stoics sought the salvation of their own souls in a corrupt manner. Let no one hesitate at the phrase of seeking the salvation of their own souls. For the salvation of the soul is nothing but the happiness and perfection of it.

This they sought out of God; and we, if we will excel them, must seek it in him. They sought it as the perfection of their own beings,

as something distinct from God; we must seek it as a participation and enjoyment of him.

Will it seem strange to any to hear it said, that men may be selfish in seeking their own salvation? How were the Stoics? Why may not a man be selfish in the undue love of one part of himself as well as of another?

To account salvation nothing else but preservation from misery, and to seek such a salvation, is as compatible to the carnal as to the spiritual man. To account heaven a state of ease, peace, honour, everlasting safety, and a paradise of pleasure, and to desire it as such; why is not this consistent with a carnal heart?

But further, To account salvation something positive, the perfection and highest accomplishment of our souls, and to seek it as the accomplishment of our own particular beings, as something distinct from God, and to set up ourselves as anti-deities, what is this better than Stoicism?

If we take salvation in the true Gospel sense, for the perfecting of the soul in God; then indeed we cannot seek the salvation of our souls more than the glory of God. But in this false notion of it which I was just now speaking of, we may; the Stoics did, and many do. Take it it in a true Gospel sense, and it is impossible to disjoin the glory of God and our own salvation. The stronger the love of God is, the purer is the love of our own souls. The salvation of the soul comprehends its being perfected in humility, self-nothingness, as well as other graces. Thus the glorified spirits cast down their crowns before God, and ascribe all worthiness to him; they seek

not themselves, nay, they feel not themselves at all distinct from him. It is perfect nonsense in religion to desire heaven as a self-accommodation.

Oh thou Almighty Goodness, Omnipresent Life, Perfect Beauty, deliver me from fancying a self-sufficiency, doting upon self-excellencies, and settling upon a self-centre! I am straitened at home; the more I seek to wring a happiness out of myself, the more I pinch and pain myself. I see something beyond myself, something better than I am, something that I had rather be than what am; my soul stretcheth itself upon thee. Oh widen it, enlarge it, that it may stretch itself more upon thee! Oh blessed God, the supreme and sweetest good, wrap up my mind in thyself, increase my longings, till they be perfected into loves, and those loves into pure and endless delights!

MEDITATION LXXVI.

Of the love of relations.

To love any relations more than God, or to prefer them before him, is to be a predominant lover of the world.

To be pleased with faults, or so much as to dispense with them, because they are found in our children, or any other relations, is to prefer them before truth and justice, and consequently the world before God. The priest Eli is said to have preferred his children before God, because he did not severely enough correct, or punish, or restrain them.

Christ Jesus undervalued all carnal relations, in comparison of the Father, his will, and the doing of it. *Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?* He undervalued all things in comparison of his Father's image; *Whosoever doth the will of my Father, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.* And he requires us to do so; *Whosoever will be my disciple, let him forsake father and mother.*

The apostle Paul valued no man according to the flesh, by any outward thing, riches or poverty, relation or not relation, 2 *Cor.* v. 16.

When the interest of God stood in competition, Levi did not know father or brother, *Deut.* xxxiii. 9.

And if my brother or child do not walk according to the law, his relation shall be no relation; his circumcision accounted as uncircumcision.

To prefer the relation of children to us, before their relation to God, to love our own image more than the image of God in them, is to make self the standard of our love, and the creature to surpass the Creator.

To speak properly, that kindness and benignity in parents, that dutifulness and obedience in children, that faithfulness and sweetness in husbands and wives, that tenderness and helpfulness in brothers or sisters, or any friends, by which chiefly they are lovely, is of God, is God, and so to be loved and relished. And to love them under a distinct, limited consideration, as ours, or as a kin to us, is not so pure and spiritual as it ought to be.

The truth is, there is nothing our's. For God is the proprietor, we are only the possessors; and why should we be so fond of that which is another's? It looks like a piece of melancholy; as if a man should go into a jeweller's shop, and there fondly hug a jewel which is only shewed him; or put into his hands, to judge of the worth of it. How do poor worldlings act over the part of mad men, when they seem to themselves very wise! The part of that melancholist that I have read of, who would stand upon the shore, and make much mirth at the coming in of every ship, saying, It was laden with his own goods.

And as for relation, what is it but a notion? It is something, I know not what, extrinsic to us. And why should I be fond of every man that is called by my name? Or why should any man be proud that he is called Charles, and is name-sake to a great king?

And what is relation to us? What are we, that it should be so lovely a thing to be like us? To be like to God, to be a kin to him indeed is something; the nearer to him the nobler, and the happier. I must needs have a foolish, and false, and proud conceit of myself surely, that am fond of a child, because he resembles me.

Lord, Thou art nearer of kin to me than all the world. The material world is nothing at all of kin to my soul, not so much as my cloaths are to my body. But in thee I subsist; thou hast done that for me, that father and mother could never do. Let all relation be swallowed up in thee, that I may be in a spiritual sense another Melchisedeck!

MEDITATION LXXVII.

Of the love of other men.

To love and esteem man, any man more than God, denominates a lover of the world.

To love man *qua* [as he is] is a Christian duty, and an high perfection. It is as if it were to be transformed into the nature of that blessed Being, whose name is Love.

God is recommended to us by this, *God is Love.* Christ commends him to our imitation in this especially, *Matt.* v. 44, 45.

Christ Jesus is commended to us by this. Oh the wonderful love that he shewed to mankind, in laying down his life for them! Yea, his whole life, before he laid it down, was love; it was teaching, healing, feeding men, serving the necessities of souls and bodies.

The best of men are commended for this: Moses the meekest of men; David sympathising with his very enemies in their afflictions; Jeremiah mourning over the sins of Israel, and the calamities even of Moab; Paul most passionately desirous of the salvation of the persecuting Jews.

The best of heathens is commended for it. Socrates professed, That he knew nothing but to love; he styled himself θεράπων ἔρωτος a servant of love.

It is the speech of a Jesuit, *Neminem odit, qui Deum amat*; He that loves God, hates no man.

By this epithet things are commended. The best wisdom, is that which is gentle and loving;

and the best valour is kind, and apt to forgive.

But it will be asked, Is every man lovely?

Yes there is something lovely in every man, something of God that love will delight in. No man is so bad, but there may be found something of good nature, good manners, good offices, at some time or other; all this is an emanation from God.

If none of this were, yet the relation wherein man stands to God, as a reasonable creature, makes him lovely.

We love our sown corn in hope, and many other things. Let us love the worst of men, in hopes that they may yet, by divine grace, become truly pious.

Lord, shed abroad this large, liberal, generous grace into my heart! Enlarge my heart, that it may comprehend all mankind! This is better, than, with Barzillai, to entertain a king and his army; or with Ahasuerus, to keep open house for a kingdom. Thus shall I, though I have nothing to give, be as charitable as the rich, and more munificent than the princes of the earth.

I charge thee, O my soul, this day, in the presence of the God, whose name is Love, that thou hate no child of man; and that thou mayest be sure not to do it, that thou do not so much as secretly despise the meanest, or suspend good offices towards the worst, or rejoice in the sins or sufferings of the most injurious of men, on the earth.

But (alas!) what pity is it that this divine affection should be depraved, that love itself should become filthy and unchaste. Separate man and

his perfections from God, and then love him or them distinctly, and this love becomes adulterous. For although all men are to be loved in God, and for his sake, yet no man is to be loved any otherwise than so.

They prefer man before God, who stand admiring the excellencies and perfections of any man, as the accomplishments of this or that particular being, and not as beams from the Father of Lights. It is the part of unrefined minds to admire diversity of gifts, and overlook the same Spirit. How nobly does the refined soul live and act, who viewing the perfections of all men in God the Fountain, enjoys them all as fully and deliciously, as if they were his own!

They also, who have men's persons in admiration, being partial in their estimation or commendation of men, by reason of their greatness, or of some advantage to be got by them. This the apostle taxeth as a carnal thing.

There is indeed a kind of civil honour and respect due to men by virtue of their office, authority, and higher station in the world, and a peculiar, grateful respect to be shewed to benefactors.

But to have the eyes blinded, the judgment bribed, the noble affection of love made mercenary, by any secular greatness; either to love men the more, or to think that God does so, because of their temporal prosperity and grandeur, is to call the proud happy, and to bless the covetous, whom God abhors; it is to prostitute that affection, that should be preserved chaste.

We ought to think and estimate according to God, to love as he loves, and to hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which he also hateth; otherwise we prefer the world before God.

To delight in the company, and either profane or jejune communication of worldly or wicked men, more than in the society of the godly, is a worldly love.

In our hearts to love or esteem any vile person, be he of what civil capacity he will, before them that fear the Lord, be their civil capacity ever so mean, is as good an argument of an unsanctified mind, as the contrary is of a citizen of Zion. (Psal. xv. 4.) *In whose eyes a vile person is contemned.* In this courtly age it would be looked upon as an unmannerly behaviour in the prophet, who would not vouchsafe to look towards the king of Israel, 2 *Kings*, iii. 14. But certainly it is worse than unmannerly, to have the greatest respect and kindness for them that are not at all of Israel.

MEDITATION LXXVIII.

Of flattery.

This brings me to think of the foul vice of flattery, which although it be not always an estimation of men, (for men often flatter those whom in their hearts they disesteem and despise,) yet it would be thought so, and is as worldly as the other.

An humble behaviour indeed is ornamental; soft answers are good and useful.

To approve and commend a good man, or a good action, is so far from being simply evil, that sometimes it is duty, and may serve good ends.

But it requires a great deal of wisdom. For,

First, It easily mingles itself with something evil, and is corrupted by covetousness, slavish fear, or self-love. Men may most set off themselves, and study to endear themselves most, when they commend other men.

Secondly, It is easily perverted to ill ends, and may as soon make me prouder, as better.

Commendation therefore must be given justly, seasonably, proportionably, and should be mixed with the remembrance of God, as Paul's was to Philemon, *ver* 4, 5.

Flattery is sometimes gross, in words; commending evil, and calling it by good names; assenting to every thing at a venture, or denying without reason; magnifying some little thing beyond its desert, and extenuating some foul fault into a mere peccadillo, or unavoidable infirmity.

Sometimes it is more fine and subtile, in actions; in a crouching, truckling, over-obsequious behaviour.

I need say no more of flattery, than that it is,

First, An argument of a mean and slavish mind. The truly generous mind that adores truth, knows not how to give flattering titles.

Secondly, That it is of most mischievous consequence, and very pernicious in its effects; because it infects princes' courts and great men's houses. Flatterers by blinding the judgment of princes, do at once put out the eyes of a nation. For they lead those out of the way, who when

they are misled, cause the rest of the world to err.

We know how fatal it proved to Ahab, when his chaplains the prophets, and the courtiers conspired together to deceive him. *Go up and prosper*, say the prophets; *Let thy word be as one of their's*, says the courtier.

And with what indignation God resents the daubing of these prophets, and their putting pillows under men's heads and arms, the prophet Ezekiel does acquaint us.

Lord, what is man or his power, who can only kill the body, that I should fear and flatter him in any thing, that is hateful to thee! What profit or preferment can I expect from man that shall countervail thy dishonour, or the prejudice done to truth and holiness, by sordid flattery, or sinful compliance! Oh that the interest of God and religion be exalted in my soul far above all these petty, carnal considerations! And oh that the messengers of God would seriously examine, whether they be not the servants of men, of the worst part of men, even their lusts, by imprisoning the truth, lest it should fly in some honourable or worshipful face; whether they do not tremble to speak of temperance, before incestuous Felix; or whether they can take such fair leave of their patrons, as Paul took of his Ephesians, *I have kept back nothing that was profitable to you!*

MEDITATION LXXIX.

Of worldly business.

Under this phrase, the world, is comprehended also the work, employment and business of the world.

To prefer the business of this world before God, denominates a predominant lover of the world.

God has endowed man with active principles, designing him for business.

To be active, is to be like God, who is life itself. He is not an idle spectator, enjoying himself, and minding nothing else; neither doing good nor evil, (as some profane men in the prophet imagined him,) but he is good, and doth good.

An idle and inactive life is unmanly and infamous. No station does exempt men from business. Gentlemen and ladies have their callings. There is business accommodated to all sorts of men. Having already spoken of idleness, I will say no more of it here, but this, a good man must needs love business, as it is a vehicle of grace. For how can a man exercise righteousness, mercy or charity, without business?

The necessities of human life are so many, either our own or other men's, that it is impossible any man should be idle, but who is of an idle, sensual temper.

To prevent mistakes, I will first consider what is not to prefer the business of the world before God.

To be diligent and industrious in our callings, with a good design, is not it.

To be more in worldly business, than in heavenly, is not it. God himself has allowed six days to one.

To employ our hands in working more than in lifting up to heaven, is not worldly. If we speak properly, to observe due measures, and propound right ends in worldly business, is conformity to the will of God, and heavenly.

God acted like himself in the creation of the world, as well as in the redemption of it; and so godly men, in employing themselves about worldly objects, as well as spiritual. The angels are as well in heaven when they are employed upon earth, in preserving the goings of the saints, as in their most immediate contemplations.

To give the precedency to worldly businesss, as to management and action, is not simply, and always it. A lesser business, and more ignoble, may be *pro hic et nunc*, [under present circumstances,] more necessary than a greater, and preferable to it. The necessities of the body may take place of the convenience of the soul.

To do every thing in its proper season, is a point of high wisdom, and indeed religion. Let us always remember that religion is in the due management of worldly business, as well as otherwise.

To do works of necessity or charity on the Lord's day, is not it.

To have a reverend esteem for that day, is good and necessary. Religion flourishes in a kingdom, or a soul, as that is observed. But yet

there may be a superstition in it; which our Saviour, by his example and doctrine, has endeavoured to heal. The Sabbath was made for man, and must give place to him. But let all take heed they do not create necessities, or pretend them, as I doubt too many of the παιδες ιατρων, the chirurgical tribe do.

To put one's self upon business; to offer one's service for the good of a neighbour; to meddle in other men's matters uncalled, by way of assistance or advice; to prevent sin or mischief, (as Lot;) to reconcile differences, (as Moses,) is not it. I do not think that either Lot in his *Nay, my brethren, do not so wickedly*; nor Moses, in his *Wherefore smitest thou thy fellow?* were pragmatical, as it seems they were then interpreted.

There is such a fault as pragmaticalness [or, officious interference;] but a generous activity, and public-spiritedness, which proceeds from an universal love, is unjustly branded. Yea, I will say it is base cowardice in some men of abilities, to hide themselves from business, and from the necessities of mankind, (that is, from their own flesh) under this pretence, that they will not be busy-bodies.

It is better to offer one's self ten times where there is no need, than to deny assistance once where there is.

Blessed are the peace-makers, said the great Peace-maker.

And I cannot but account it a base humour, to reproach active men for busy-bodies.

It is true, Christ Jesus would not meddle with things not belonging to him; but as to the things

belonging to him, he sought opportunites for business. He went up and down doing good to souls and bodies of men.

MEDITATION LXXX.

Περὶ τῆ πολυπραγμονεῖν,

Or, of the love of worldly business.

But there is a love of worldly business, which is intemperate, and a symptom of a worldly mind. And although one should say, That they that are guilty of it, are the best sort of sensualists, (because business and action is a better thing, less gross, more agreeable to the active nature of the soul, than the dull love of riches,) yet this is very small comfort.

Some dote too much upon their own worldly business, which yet is materially lawful. It is an easy thing to over-do, to be over-diligent, over-industrious, over-painful. Do not they dote upon business, who are employed about it by day, dream of it by night, pursue it with a hurry inseparable from fear, perplexity and discontent, that will be ready to fall out with God or man, if they put any stop to them in their business?

Suppose business to be lawful, yet it must also be necessary, or highly convenient, to justify men's zeal about it. What necessity is there, or convenience either, that rich men should be still richer, or that one man should have all the trade of a town?

To clog one's self with worldly business, in order to self-enriching, and growing up into un-

necessary grandeur, or unwieldy bulk in the world, argues a worldly spirit.

To busy one's self, in order to the molesting and troubling of other men, to be encouragers of law, troublers of Israel, argues a worldly mind.

To busy one's self so in worldly matters, as to exclude or retrench heavenly business, not to subordinate the former to the latter, to love business for business' sake, without respect to any good to be done thereby, argues an intemperate lover of worldly business.

Some concern themselves too much in other men's business. To meddle in things that we know not, or in things no way belonging to us, is foolish; but to meddle in the matters of other men, to do them mischief, is wicked. The *sycophantic delators*, or informers, so much inveighed against by the old comedians, peeped and pried into every conversation, to pick quarrels, and find faults; and yet the varlets accounted this ἐνεργεῖν τὴν πόλιν, [to benefit the city,] and βοηθεῖν τοῖς νόμοις τοῖς κειμένοις, καὶ μὴ ἐπιτρέπειν ποτ' ἢν τις ἁμαρτάνῃ, [to aid the insulted laws, and allow no one to offend,] as he in Aristophanes brags. Such a kind of fellow was Zibah the servant of Saul; such an one the king of Israel suspected the king of Syria, Naaman's master, to be, 2 *Kings* v. 7. David often complains of this sort of men; Doeg the pick-thank, the emblem of a sycophantic courtier, and other of Saul's courtiers, that digged pits for him, laid snares for him; that said, *When will he slip or fall, that we may surprise him?*

To love to know the faults of men is not a good temper; yea, it is painful to a godly mind.

To look into the faults of men, to bring them to punishment, may be a good work; it may be done sincerely, for the execution of some good law that is of moment; it may possibly be in mercy to the offender, and out of pure kindness; as if one should say, I love him, therefore I will get him punished.

But men are not generally of so pure and public a spirit. They are so revengeful, so covetous, that this makes the office of informers thought hardly of; and it is accounted a fault to be inquisitive into the faults of other men. It is hard to find an informer out of pure zeal or love to truth; but mercenaries and pickpockets enough. Flatterers are generally busy bodies. For how shall they ingratiate themselves with their great masters, but with the faults of other men?

But to lay snares for the righteous, to watch for their halting, to seek occasion against a man in the matter of his God, though a law would favour, is wicked, and much resembles that great busy body, that goes up and down continually seeking to devour. Daniel's accusers had a law to justify them; yet I doubt not but they were wicked informers for all that.

Curiosity, or an intemperate desire to be acquainted with other men's secrets, nothing belonging to us, argues vanity of mind, and a spirit not well conversant at home, and may be reduced to the disease of itching ears. There are secrets of nature, of religion, of one's own soul, to be inquired into, and it is laudable to inquire into them. We need not lust after the secrets

of other men. Besides one is uneasy to be trusted with them. It makes a man a slave if he do not reveal them, and a knave if he do.

Lord, thou art life itself, and a pure act; thou art good, and doest good continually; thou hast endowed me with an active nature, thou hast furnished me with business enough of my own, and other men's, for this world, and for the future. Suffer me not to hide my hand in my bosom, and to look on as an idle spectator, unconcerned, but notwithstanding all temptations from the flesh, the devil and the world, imitate thy active and beneficent nature! But O Eternal Wisdom, teach me to order my actions with discretion, to lay out myself in actions pure, proper, profitable. Grant that I may not be impure and unprofitable, like a stagnant pool; nor yet troublesome nor offensive, like an overflowing torrent; ever flowing, but without inundation; ever running, but as ever within my own banks; not hiding my light under a bushel, yet shining within my own sphere!

MEDITATION LXXXI.

Of the fashions of the world.

There are some things in the world that are not properly called business, which yet to prefer before God denominates a man worldly; and these are the fashions of the world.

I cannot properly call it pride, covetousness, or voluptuousness, to conform to these, and yet it is carnal.

There are, indeed, civil and innocent fashions of the world, to which to conform is no fault; nay, considering man as a member of society, seems expedient.

Matters of apparel, so far as one's quality, estate, health, and other considerable circumstances, will allow. Matters of salutation, of civil courtesy, and respect, seem to be of this sort. Nay, to be singular in these, especially to place religion in them, and to make conscience of non-conformity to them, seems to be an argument of superstition and weakness, and of a mind not understanding its just liberty, or valuing itself by false measures.

But to follow any evil, or suspected mode or guise, because it is a custom, and fashionable, is a fashioning one's self according to the world, or being conformed to this present evil world.

To lust after every new fashion, though ever so costly, inconvenient, exotic, and to follow it greedily, is an argument of a light mind, and inconsistent; yea, it is a very troublesome thing, not to be able to keep in a fashion till one be well warm in it.

For a free nation to dote on the fashions of other nations, seems to be ungenerous, and a kind of subjecting themselves, and to be a cause of confusion; and it is observed to be prejudicial to the trade and wealth of a nation.

I think I have read of laws somewhere made against bringing in strange fashions; at least the precept of the wise preacher will fairly reach them, Prov. xxiv. 21. *Meddle not with them that are given to change.*

All following of fashions that are in conjunction with pride, prodigality, wantonness, and is either the parent or child of fleshly lust, is a symptom of a worldly mind, and denominates a lover of the world. And to prefer the fashions of the world before sobriety, modesty, charity, humility, or truth, is to prefer the world before God.

I restrain not fashion to apparel, but extend it to all matters of opinion or conversation.

If they be works of darkness, we are flatly forbidden to have any fellowship with them, though they be committed at noon-day, though they have a general approbation, or public sanction. If it be an evil, though a multitude have made it a fashion, we are not to follow it.

Alas! How great a number of people are led wholly by example; that examine nothing, judge nothing, make no choice of any thing, but live merely by this maxim, to do as the most do; yea, and that even in things relating to religion itself.

The greatest part follow what is most fashionable, even in the worship of God. It may happen indeed that what is most fashionable may be good; but whether it be so or not, it matters not to them; for they proceed not by the goodness of the thing, but by the fashionableness of it; so that though it be good, it is no virtue in them that follow it; for if any other way quite different should be in fashion, they would follow that too.

If we could suppose a thing purely indifferent, it were no fault to follow it, according as it is usual or fashionable. Nay, it would rather seem

an argument of a proud and quarrelsome mind, not to do it. But I cannot conceive how any thing *in actu exercito*, [in deliberate action,] can be called indifferent. For when human acts are circumstantiated, they become prudent or imprudent, comely or uncomely, fit or unfit for their ends, that is, good or evil, all of them.

What is the worship of the whole vulgus of the Papists, but an apish imitation of a received mode and fashion? And it were to be wished, that Protestants, who have a better worship, had generally any better ground for it than they.

Lord, I know that man is a sociable creature, apt to imitate what is exemplified to him, loth to be singular; and also that his soul is now so sunk into his senses, that he is more prone to follow the sight of his eyes, than the light of reason, which thou hast set up to guide him. Alas! I see such a fashion is not safe to imitate, yet I find it hard to resist. If I be carried down the stream, I may be drowned in perdition; if I strive against it, I must take much pains, and be counted foolish for my pains. Oh that by thy grace thou wouldest so refine, exalt, enable and ennoble my reason, that it may exercise a just dominion over flesh and sense, and powerfully direct me to the pursuit of whatever is just and holy, and good in thy eyes, though it be not fashionable in the eyes of men!

MEDITATION LXXXII.

Of swearing.

Among the fashions of the world, I cannot but a little think, (and yet cannot well endure to think,) of swearing.

I cannot well tell to what head of the worldly life to reduce swearing, except it be to the fashions of the world. Surely it cannot be the love of profit, nor of pleasure, nor a desire of honour, that puts men upon this; and yet it is worldly, and a symptom of a profane mind.

Men do not ordinarily get any thing by swearing, except it be in cases of false swearing, where they sell their oaths to serve another man's interest. This is so hateful a practice, so like Judas, (for indeed it is the setting of God himself to sale,) that though it should bring in thirty pieces of silver, or some such small matter, one would think no man should dare to make the bargain.

But the ordinary fashionable swearing in common discourse gets nothing; nor is it with any design to get that I can imagine. Nay, it may reasonably be supposed to be to men's loss; for it very much tends to the weakening of a man's reputation in the apprehension of all sober men, (with whom it is a maxim, That he that will swear will lie,) and that is certainly a worldly disadvantage to men.

In the common notion of pleasure, it cannot be pleasant; it relieves no hunger, quenches no thirst, gratifies no sense. Nay, it is harsh to the

ear, and must needs be unpleasant to the conscience, that at any times reflects upon it.

It is shameful and dishonourable among all sober persons; and conciliates no honour or real respect with those that are themselves addicted to it; being common to the meanest and basest of men, as well as to the best gentleman of them all. Nay, they that are addicted to this vice, do not ordinarily allow it in their servants and children; and sometimes will not fail to tell us so.

And what, has the devil found out something that is devilish and damning, that is neither profitable, pleasant, nor honourable? Is it not strange that that monster should have any volunteers in his service, that will serve him without any wages at all, and serve him so vigorously too, as if they would take hell by storm, and the kingdom of darkness by violence! Oh it is the fashion, it is an argument of an agreeable temper, and a mind not hatefully squeamish.

And Oh God, how should thy soul be avenged on such a nation as this, that has entertained such a fashion as this! What pity can possibly be shown to such desperate wretches, who will needs go to hell in state, and perish modishly!

And is there no more plausible pretence than fashion? Yes, some think they come off better that impute it to passion. They were angry, they were affronted, abused, they could not be believed. In short, such and such things would make any man mad, and who could forbear swearing?

Alas! What miserable shifts are these, to confess madness for the excuse of folly; to take

sanctuary in Scylla to escape Charybdis! Shall violent passions be brought to excuse swearing, when themselves cannot be excused? If it be a sin to swear, is it not a greater to swear in a mad mood? To be at all possessed of a devil of passion is sad and grievous, though it be a dumb devil; but if it be such a devil as we read of in *Luke* ix. that makes a man cry out, and foam again, it is much more dreadful. Or shall we say that sin is lessened by being multiplied, after the manner of a river cut into many channels? A river so cut, will indeed be the less river; but it will have never the less water, if you take it in all the channels. If swearing in a mad mood and violent passion be the less sin because of the passion, yet that part of the sin which is wanting in the oath will be found in the passion.

Some excuse the matter by the infrequency of it. Now and then they rap out an oath, but it is out of forgetfulness and unawares; yea, possibly theyswipe their mouths with a, God forgive me that I should swear.

This indeed will excuse a *tanto*, the seldomer the better. But Christ Jesus commands, *Swear not at all*, which refers to time as well as things. This now-and-then swearing is an argument of a mind forgetful of God; which is a character bad enough. Allow ourselves in this, and it will soon multiply.

I wonder men should excuse themselves in this sin by the infrequency of it, more than in others. No body says, I steal but a horse or two in a year; I play the whore or the whoremaster but twice or thrice a week; yet one would think

there were more temptations to either of those than to swearing.

How many soever the faults of good men are, yet it is a very rare thing to find a godly swearer, a man of true seriousness and hearty religion, that will adventure by this method to vent his passion, adorn his discourse, or humour the company.

If by seldom be meant, that we never swear but solemnly, in a weighty matter, and such a one too as cannot otherwise be known, or will not be believed, accompanied with a just reverence of God, (such as we read of sometimes in the history of Abraham, Jacob, David, and in the writings of St. Paul,) let such swearing pass for a part of God's worship. But rash and unnecessary swearing, though it be ever so seldom, proceeds from the devil, says our Saviour; and leads to him, says his apostle, *James* v. 12. and therefore I may safely say is a preferring of the world before God. If it be by the Creator, it is blasphemous; if by the creature, idolatrous.

This puts me in mind of another excuse for swearing. They only swear some petty oath; no blasphemy, no bloody oaths, as they call them.

But I suppose these petty oaths are more than yea or nay, and if so, they are forbidden in that ὅλως, *Swear not at all.* Nay, that prohibition seems to be meant principally of swearing by the creature, as appears by what follows in the text.

To attest a creature, as if it knew our hearts, or were able to judge us, is ridiculous idolatry. To swear by the creature, is to take God's name in vain; for it is a manifest abusing of his works.

The blessed virgin was an excellent piece of divine handy work, but she was not made to swear by. This is an honour that she never dreamed of, when she prophesied that all generations should call her blessed. All our divines, I think, agree that swearing is an act of worship. How strangely, then, do Protestants contradict themselves, that deny the worshipping of saints, and yet swear ordinarily by the lady; and yet more nonsensically than so too, when they swear by the mass, which yet they deny to be.

The example of David and others, saying, *As thy soul liveth*, will not justify. The best expositors say it is no more than, *As sure as thou livest.* Nay, Estius, and other learned commentators, say that Joseph's *life of Pharaoh*, (for so the words are in the Hebrew,) are but a vehement obtestation; others make them a prayer; and those that make them an oath, blame him for it. Sure I am, the example of Joseph will not so much justify, as the express prohibition of Jesus will condemn. And what a weight does the apostle James lay on this? He ushers it in with an *Above all things, my brethren;* and backs it with the greatest argument, danger of damnation, *James* v. 12.

God grant me to live under the authority of thy holy word! Lord, charge it severely upon my heart, and the hearts of all men, frequently and affectionately to consider such passages of thy holy word as these are: *Whatsoever is more than yea and nay, cometh of evil. Swear not, lest ye fall into comdemnation; for every idle word men must give account. By thy words thou shalt*

be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned. If any man bridle his tongue, the same is a perfect man.

MEDITATION LXXXIII.

Of worldly wisdom in general.

Among other things of the world, the Scripture also makes mention of *worldly wisdom.* This is so corrupt a thing that it is put in opposition to *the grace of God*, by the apostle Paul, 2 *Cor.* i. 12. and in the same place to *simplicity and godly sincerity.* It is described by the apostle James to be *earthly* and *sensual*, and is said to be accompanied with envyings and strivings of heart. We may more fully see what it is by its opposite, *the wisdom that is from above;* this is *pure, peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without hypocrisy and partiality.* So then the worldly wisdom is envious, contentious, cruel, unmerciful, unfruitful, hypocritic aland partial, and the worldly-wise man is a hater of God.

This worldly-wise man is not one that understands the world, and knows the fashion of it; though he know it so well that a cripple is not able to halt before him.

He is not one that understands the business of the world, the best markets and bargains, the most advantageous way of trading, the best seasons of buying and selling, and getting gain.

He is not one that is subtile in counsel, and knows how to anticipate, suppress, overreach an

enemy. So wise was Hushai, the friend of David, the friend of God.

But, in general, he is wise to do evil, (as the devil is) to advance the interest of the world, and the flesh, above the interest of God, above justice, truth, charity, peace, purity; and is more particularly described by the apostle Paul and St. James. He is described by the apostle Paul, as one double and insincere; by the apostle James, as one impure, envious, contentious, harsh, implacable, merciless, unfruitful, partial, and hypocritical.

It is evident by the light of Scripture, that all these things, *viz.* impurity, envy, contentiousness, &c. are works of the flesh, earthly, devilish, and certain symptoms of the spirit of the world, and of a lover of the world, in whom the love of the Father is not found.

It is a pity to let all these pass with a general animadversion only; they are proper subjects of a distinct meditation.

But in the mean time, what matter of sorrow and astonishment does this general observation administer!

Good God, If these sins of the spirit be certain symptoms of a worldly mind, and companions of the worldly wisdom, how does the whole world lie in wickedness! How far has the serpentine poison diffused itself! Alas, Who has not some of the spawn of it in him! I see man did not in vain eat of the tree of knowledge, of the tree to be desired to make one wise. For he is thereby grown very wise to do evil; and the children of this world are more skilled in their impure wisdom, than the children of light in the pure.

MEDITATION LXXXIV.

Of impure wisdom.

The wisdom which is from above is pure, says the apostle James. From hence it follows by the opposition, That the worldly wisdom is impure.

I take *pure*, to be a general description of the heavenly wisdom, and all the species following do partake of it, so the worldly wisdom is in general impure. All sin indeed is impurity, the most proper description of it. Therefore the devil himself is in the Gospel described by this especially, *The unclean spirit.* So that I will not make impurity in the abstract a distinct head of meditation, but will a little insist upon impure wisdom in the concrete, (as it exists in the subject of it,) without interference with any of the particulars that follow in the text.

Impure wisdom is a symptom of a worldly mind.

Now as the pure wisdom is, as the apostle calls it, to be *wise unto that which is good*, Rom. xvi. 19. so the impure wisdom is, to be *wise to do evil*, as the prophet speaks, *Jer.* iv. 22. Of this there are several kinds, besides what the apostle reckons up in the following words.

They are impurely wise, who make use of their cunning or subtilty to undermine or overreach others in transactions, contrary to plainness and simplicity. That take advantage of the ignorance or weakness of others, in matter of consultation, bargain, law, or the like, to hurt them.

That also is impure wisdom, which serves oppression and violence. Thus wise were Pharaoh and his Egyptian counsellors. They took a wise course, but what was it for? to oppress and murder, *Exod.* i. 10. *Come, let us deal wisely,* &c. Was it not a cunning way of killing, to make the midwives, the Lucinæ, to be instruments of ushering the children into the shades of death; to escape the guilt of drowning them, by only bidding them to drown one another?

That also is impure wisdom, that serves the lust of fornication and adultery. I have read of many witty devices for the satisfaction of lust; the poets furnish us with abundance of them, even among their very gods. And I think the moral of all those transformations of himself that Jupiter made, is nothing else but to describe this amorous impurity, this impure wisdom. That of the golden shower especially, is acted over every day; whereby many handsome bodies are debauched, and fair persons corrupted. What female constitution so hard and dry, as not to be softened by a shower of gold, especially if it comes from above? But the Scripture instance is most authentic, of subtile Jonadab, who taught his friend Amnon a way how he might satisfy his lust in respect to his sister Tamar, 2 *Sam.* xiii.

That also is impure wisdom, that serves ambition. How wonderful sagacious some men are to contrive their own advancement! How courtly and complimental is Absalom! He condescends to kiss the ordinary sort of people, to gain them. Oh how humble is the proud Absalom! Would any one have thought that his kissing their faces,

was only in order to their kissing his hand? Yea, the good man is troubled to see all Israel to be as sheep without a shepherd; he pities them that ailed nothing; he asperses the government, though it was the government of his father; and promises fairly, if he were made judge in the land.

That also is impure wisdom, that makes laws for snares; in what kind of society it be, it matters not. God gives no laws, but what are for our good, and if men make laws, which they matter not much, whether they be broken or kept, so they may but have an occasion to exact the penalty, it is far from the nature of God, and the method of him that governs the world. This is to debauch justice, and make her a bawd to covetousness or revenge. This was the wicked wisdom of Daniel's enemies, and of the heathens, persecuting the Christian.

Near of kin to this, is that wisdom that lays baits, and offers temptations to men, to cause them to offend, and then punishes them for offending. The Egyptians first oppressed the Israelites, and made them mad, and then punished them for complaining and mutiny. It is good to have faithful servants; but to lay baits for them, and tempt them to unfaithfulness, seems to be the method of impure wisdom. Whatever may be said in commendation of Jehu's zeal in destroying the Baalites, his wisdom in inviting them to a sacrifice, and engaging them in idolatry first, looks like a serpentine device. It is the wisdom of the devil, to make men to sin, and then torment their consciences even to despair, because

they have sinned. There are several other kinds of impure wisdom, but possibly they may fall under some of the particulars that follow in the text. I will therefore next meditate on those particulars.

MEDITATION LXXXV.

Of envy and envious wisdom.

The earthly, fleshly, and devilish wisdom, is described more particularly by the bitter envying with which it is attended, or which it does attend upon.

Envy springs from poverty. And although it be found in great and rich men, yet it is when they fancy themselves poor; and herein indeed they are inferior to them whom they envy.

The more pure and perfect any being is, the more free from envy. The all-sufficient God envies no good to his creature, however these words are to be understood—*Now lest he put forth his hand, and take of the tree of life, &c.*

It is plain and certain, that God desires that all men should be saved, and come unto the knowledge of the truth. He was so far from envying the station of man, that he hedged him in with a severe threatening; and so far from envying his recovery, that he sent his Son to make a painful inquiry, a diligent search for him, *to seek and to save that which was lost.*

The holy angels, his menial servants, imitate him; they continue their despised ministery to wretched man, contribute what they can to his

conversion, and rejoice in it. The rhetorical description that the prophet makes of the welcome that the damned or the miserable give to the Babylonish monarch, *Isa.* xiv. 9. as fitly agrees to them. Their charity rejoices, as much as the others' malignity.

The sun in the firmament, as if it were afraid that man should lie in darkness, rises and rejoices to run its race, and without disdain or envy sheds abroad its influences upon the fairest, and the vilest parts of the world.

The rain descends upon the barren ground to enrich it, and upon the rich to make it yet richer.

The richer any man is in any endowment or accomplishment, the less he is grieved at the prosperity of others. The contented man, be he who he will, is the richest; therefore he is the freest from envy.

When the devil was fallen from his happiness, he envied the happiness of man yet standing, and sought to bring him into the same condemnation with himself; so that the wisdom that serves envy, may well be called devilish.

But it is well called earthly too; for it is found predominant in none but earthly minds. David, indeed cast an envious glance at the prosperity of the wicked men of his time, *Psal.* viii. 3. But it was but a glance, he did not allow himself in it; he calls himself a fool, and a beast for it, ver. 22. But a predominant envious temper is worldly; it is contrary to the divine temper of charity, and to the nature of that blessed Being, whose name is Love.

The wisdom that serves envy, is a worldly wisdom.

Envy travails with many plots and projects, and serpentine wiles, to supplant its rivals, and undermine its superiors. Envious men are the eldest sons of the old serpent; they resemble him, as being his genuine offspring, and most natural spawn. Them therefore he inspires, and assists with his wiles and methods.

O my soul, let not thine eye be evil, because God's is good. But rejoice rather in all the bounty of God expressed towards all men. Rejoice in them all, as if they were thy own, which is the honest way of making them thine own. Do men excel thee in virtue? imitate them. Do they excel thee in wealth, power, or preferment? Rather pity them, and fear for them, lest their prosperity destroy them, than envy them.

The instances of the envious wisdom are such as these.

One while envy will break out into open wars, kill and slay all before it. How did the two proud princes fill all Italy with blood and confusion; of which their own poet assigns a cause, in the character that he gives of them—*Nec ferre potest Cæsarve priorem, Pompejusve parem,*[neither can Cæsar bear a superior, nor Pompey an equal.]

Another while it lays snares privily, and like a deadly pestilence, walks in the dark; like a serpent in the way, like an adder in the path, that biteth the horse-heels, so that his rider shall fall backward.

One while it rages, and professes itself an enemy; another while it flatters, and makes great

show of friendship. Saul possessed with this devil, will give away his daughter; if by her he may ensnare the man that had killed his thousands.

One while it will behave itself proudly, to outvie a competitor; another while it will behave itself humbly, lick the dust, prostrate itself shamefully, lie down under the feet of its rival, if by that means he may be made to stumble and fall. He croucheth and humbleth himself, that the rival may fall by that means.

Sometimes it acts by cruelty, as in Cain; sometimes by policy, as in the Patriarchs; sometimes it is covetous, and receives money, as in the chief fathers, *Gen.* xxxvii. sometimes it is prodigal, and spends money, as in the chief priests, *Mat.* xxvi.

Sometimes it will put on the vizard of devotion, as in Jezabel. This same was a dear daughter of the serpent; her he inspired with special wiles to get Naboth's vineyard, as we read in the history, 1 *Kings.* xxi.

All these, and the like to these, are instances of the serpentine wisdom; and such a kind of wisdom, to serve the designs of envy, is a symptom of a lover of the world.

Lord, Give me that full contentment with my own condition, that true valuation of things, that sincere love of all men, that I may not envy any; and that this may be my rejoicing at the last, the testimony of my conscience, that in simplicity, and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, I have had my conversation in the world!

MEDITATION LXXXVI.

Of contentiousness, and contentious wisdom.

Contentiousness and strivings are another work of the flesh, and a symptom of a worldly mind.

To contend, and that earnestly too, for the truth, is not the worldly contention. Though the truth be ever so mean, we ought to contend earnestly, and suffer all things, rather than deny it. But some truths are so mean, that a man ought not to contend for the propagation of them, nor suffer for the profession of them. I believe that Paul had a cloak, and I would suffer a man to take my coat, and cloak also, rather than deny it. But it is such a truth, as I would not contend for the profession or propagation of, nor trouble the churches' peace, nor the consciences of men about. I cannot tell whether many matters of order and discipline may not be of the same value with the apostle's cloak. Possibly they hang as loose from the essentials of religion, as his cloak did from him, and religion may live and be kept warm without them.

But to contend earnestly, to strive unto blood for the defence of the essential things of religion, is heroic, and an argument of a powerful lover of God.

To contend about worldly interests, if they be weighty, if they cannot be amicably adjusted, so it be with moderation, charity, and meekness, and no more zeal than bears proportion to the thing in controversy, before a lawful judge, is not the worldly contention.

There is a sort of magisterial men who will condemn every man for contentious that appears in vindication of his own right, though ever so duly; nay, that will brand every man for obstinate and quarrelsome, that will not tamely suffer himself to be captivated by their reasonings, be they ever so weak; and pin his faith upon their sleeve, though it be ever so ragged or rotten. These men themselves are the most contentious, and the truest authors of schism.

But the worldly contention is, when men contend eagerly or chargeably about small matters; or are resolved to part with nothing of their right in any case for peace sake.

When men delight to be in controversies, and to have their hands against every man. As some fishes delight in muddied or troubled waters, so some men are never in their own element but then.

When men contend to show their own parts, to make ostentation of their power, or merely for the sensual pleasure of overcoming; all this is carnal.

It is contentious wisdom, when men are cunning and active to beget and promote differences in the world. It is strange but true, that some men love divisions in the world, for divisions' sake, after the example of the devil; though many do it out of pride or covetousness.

The serpent was cunning to sow discord between God and man, and they are of a serpentine breed that are ingenious and studious to make dissention.

There are several instances of this contentious wisdom. The choosing of a fit season is one instance ; as the *inimicus homo* that came by night, (Mat. xiii. 25.) *While men slept, the enemy came and sowed tares.*

The observing of the temper of men, and falling in with them, when they are angry or discontented; as the counsellors of Ahasuerus did, when they perceived him to have taken an offence against the queen :

Or observing the condition of men, as being oppressed, to put them upon sedition, or tumult, after the example of Jeroboam:

Or aggravating injuries and faults. What, put up with this affront, this wrong, this injury, this loss? *Mori te satius est*, [It is better you should die.]

They that hang peace and union on unnecessary and impracticable terms, are contentious, though they make ever so many pretentions to hide the matter.

To prefer contention before peace, division before union, though by that division we might serve a worldly interest of our own, is worldly. It is to trouble the waters that we may fish in them, I mean get money, or strengthen our parties.

How dear ought peace and union to be to all good men!

Are not dissentions devilish? The devil himself has his name Satan, from being an adversary.

Are they not beastly? For the beasts merely for appetite sake, fall out with, and worry one another.

Be sure contentious men are the worst, and the most lustful sort of men. *Whence come wars and fightings among you, but from your lusts*, &c. James iv. 1.

Wilt thou, O my soul, imitate devils, or beasts, or the worst of men! God forbid.

O blessed God, infinite Wisdom, how peaceable are all thy wise counsels, to reconcile men to thyself, and to one another! Thy laws serve to this end. Thou hast created a beautiful harmony in the whole world; yea, the very contending parts thereof make for the union of the whole. Thou hast joined peace on earth with glory to thyself in the highest. Thou hast promised the greatest blessing to peace-makers. Oh inspire me, and all men, with that Divine Spirit of love, that peaceable wisdom which comes from above, and conducts the souls of men thither, from whence it and they proceeded, even to thy blessed self!

MEDITATION LXXXVII.

Of implacableness, and implacable wisdom.

An implacable spirit is a worldly spirit.

The only holy implacableness is, never to be reconciled to sin, to hate it with a perfect hatred.

The nature of God can never be reconciled to sin, till light and darkness be reconciled. But God is easily reconciled to the penitent sinner, and so ought we to be.

Good men are very placable, as appears in the examples of Joseph towards his brethren, of David towards Abigail and Shimei, and many more. For they remember what is charged upon them, *If thy brother sin against thee seven times a day, and so often repent, thou shalt forgive him.* I suppose also they think and argue with themselves, What are the injuries done to me, in comparison of the offences that I commit against God? And have not I much more reason to forgive, than to expect forgiveness?

It is not implacableness to suspend trust and confidence towards a person, that has notoriously deceived, though he profess repentance, till we have had good experience of his faithfulness; but when we have good proof, we ought to restore him to the same place in our hearts that ever he had.

It is implacableness, when men will not forgive and forget; that is, not to remember so as to retaliate, or upbraid, or so much as to bear a grudge; especially if satisfaction be offered, or repentance professed; yea, though neither be, yet we ought to be easy to forgive, and of a readiness to be reconciled, whenever terms are offered. Yea, though no terms of reconciliation be offered, no satisfaction made, no repentance professed, we ought on our part to lay down all enmity, to be free from all hatred towards our brother.

Hatred, (says the excellent Dr. More,) lies cross in the heart of a good man.

If thy brother repent, forgive him. True, but that does not imply, that if he do not repent we

should not forgive him. We ought, after the example of God, to seek reconciliation, and propound terms of reconciliation, though we be the party offended, and to seek to bring an offending brother to repentance, not so much in order to our forgiving him, as because it is the saving of a soul from hell; because it is for his good to repent. For vengeance is not ours; the sun should not go down upon our wrath. *Anger* may pass through the mind of a wise man, but it *resteth* and lodgeth only *in the bosom of fools.*

Some are so implacable that no tract of time shall wear out their resentments; no submission can allay, no gifts remove, no intercession assuage them; but they demise their hatred unto heirs and executors, and entail the quarrel on posterity. If these men could allege an ordinance of God for this, such an one as Israel had to authorise them to an endless war against Amalek, it would excuse them well; but till then it must pass for a work of the flesh, and an imitation of the grand hater of mankind.

The implacable wisdom is cunning to conceal its resentments that they shall not be discerned, that in due time it may execute revenge so as not to be avoided.

It instructs men in many wily methods, to contrive ways of revenge, to make and take fit opportunities. Absalom made as if he took no notice of the injury done his sister for the space of two full years. After that he invites his brother Amnon to a feast, to make him drunk, that he might then quarrel with him, and kill him. He conceals his anger from his brother; *He spake*

neither good nor bad to Amnon, (a Hebrew phrase, signifying to take no notice of a thing.) Nay, I suppose he concealed it from his sister too, praying her not to regard it, because he was her brother. He makes show of extraordinary love, he invites him especially to the sheep-shearing. All this while his heart gathers mischief to itself, and treasures up wrath against the day of the execution of it.

Blessed God, the most gracious natured Being, who has forgiven me an hundred talents, let it not seem grievous in my eyes to remit a few pence to my offending brother. Let thy forgiveness be my example to encourage me to forgive; and let my aptness to forgive, be my argument to prove that I am forgiven!

MEDITATION LXXXVIII.

Of unmercifulness, and merciless wisdom.

The wisdom which is from above, is full of mercy; therefore that which is cruel and merciless, is sensual, worldly, and devilish.

Mercifulness is an attribute of God, wherein he seems to glory; he makes it his name, whereby he would be known and called. The Lord proclaimed the name of the Lord, *The Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin*, Exod. xxxiv. 6. 7. Here are ten phrases of like importance. And as for his justice, it is only added

in short, that he *will by no means clear the guilty.*

What comparison can there be in infinites? And yet the psalmist, exalting the merciful nature of God, tells us that his mercies are over all his works; and elsewhere, his mercies are far above the heavens.

Angels and good men are commended for this. The angels watch for the good and safety of the elect, and bear them up in their hands. Good men are merciful, they give, they lend, they pity, they help and heal, they do good to enemies, they forgive, and pray that God would do so too; *Lord lay not this sin to their charge.*

On the other hand, the nature of the devil is cruel, murderous; he was a murderer from the beginning; and his eldest son Cain imitated him exactly for envy and murder.

There is a great deal of cruelty in taking away the life of a man unjustly; in extreme corrections, that do not reach the life; yea in the execution of a just sentence of death or punishment, there may be much cruelty in the executioner or spectators; according to that true saying of the moralist, *Ferus est qui fruitur pœna*, [he is savage, who takes delight in punishment.]

In many other things there is much cruelty. There are not only bloody soldiers, cruel gladiators and assassins; but cruel masters to servants, both in imposing of work, and withholding of maintenance. Cruel landlords, that squeeze and grind their poor tenants.

Cruel patrons, that consume what their clients have, in procuring for them what they want.

Cruel physicians and chirurgions, who maintain diseases and prolong sores; who take pleasure in the pain, and find their own health in the sickness of their patients.

Cruel magistrates, who govern their people with scorpions instead of sceptres.

Cruel ministers, that either starve or poison the souls of men.

Nay there are cruel friends. I expect it will be asked, How that can be? For ought I see, the greatest cruelties are practised under the notion of friendship. The oppressing usurer would have you think, he befriends you, when he consumes you; that he supports you, when he supplants you; that he heals your disease, when he increases it; that he secures you, when indeed he secures your estate to himself. A kindness much like that of him who opened the eyes of our mother Eve a little at present, but spoiled her sight forever after.

Your oppressing neighbour would be thought friendly, when he gives you the bitter pill of a dear bargain, sugared with six months' time for payment.

This kind of friendship is just like the dealing of Hercules with Anteus in the story; you would have thought he had been lovingly hugging and embracing the giant in his arms, when he was indeed choaking and strangling him.

They that have no compassion on the miserable, whether they be poor or sick, or sinful; much more they that trample upon those whom God hath cast down, scorn them whom men have harmed, and take away the garment of the naked from him, (as Eliphaz speaketh,) are nothing of

kin to God, nor God to them, nor shall ever be owned for his children, till ostriches are found hatched under the wings of storks.

The cruel worldly wisdom is that which is cunning to invent torments.

Many heathenish tyrants of old have been famous for this hellish ingenuity.

And the modern Papists have endeavoured to match them; as may appear to any that reads the story of the persecutions in Piedmont, written by the ingenious and faithful historian, Sir Samuel Moriand; and by the history of the Irish rebellion.

The holy history furnishes us with examples of many whom the devil (the great *Proloctonus*,) has inspired with cruel wisdom.

Thus cruelly wise was Ahithophel against the life of good king David; and Haman and his accomplices against the Jews.

What an hellish device was that, to cut off such a mighty nation, man, woman, and child, by the edge of the sword, and all for a little unmartialness found in one mal-content melancholist among them!

The offering up of poor children to Moloch was cruel and unmerciful. But the wisdom of this cruelty appeared in the loud beating of drums, and other noises, made on purpose to secure their ears from any complaints that might affect them, and bar up their hearts against all compassion. To burn the children was cruelty; to drown their cry was cruel wisdom.

And do we not every day see what devices and shifts unmerciful men use, that they may not

show mercy, and to prevent all occasions or temptations so to do; stopping their ears, shutting their doors, getting out of the way, pretending not to be at home, or not at leisure, when the poor would beg or borrow ought of them? The comedian Plautus has well described this churlish uncharitable wisdom in the person of Euclio; and the wise Solomon in his Prov. iii. 28. *Go, and come again to morrow.*

Lord let me be rather accounted a poor shiftless fool, than either be wise to do evil, or not to do good!

MEDITATION LXXXIX.

Of unfruitful wisdom.

The heavenly wisdom is full of good fruits; the unfruitful then must needs be earthly and worldly.

Concerning unfruitfulness I have in part prevented myself in my meditation of idleness. But yet there are several things to be considered further.

To do ill, and to do nothing, are both kinds of idleness. And though it may not look like good grammar, I am sure it is good divinity, that to be wise to do nothing, is to be wise to do evil.

Eliphaz indeed in Job says, that he that is wise may be profitable to himself; and surely he ought to be profitable to others also. Whatever gifts the good Spirit of God sheds forth upon men, are given them to profit with, saith the apostle.

The most precious metals profit nothing, *Nisi temperato splendeant usu*, [unless they shine by moderate use;] and elsewhere, *Celata virtus paulum distat inertiæ*, [concealed virtue differs but little from idleness.]

A fool holding his tongue (they say) may pass for a wise man. But sure I am that a wise man holding his tongue differs little from a fool.

Is there not a wise man among you? The apostle implies, that it becomes wise men to be active, to do good, to compose differences.

Oh, but our wise men account it a piece of their wisdom, not to put their fingers into the fire, (as they call it,) when there is no need. It is very true; but if there be ever so much need, it is all one with many of these wise men.

For my part, I believe it will be an hard thing to find any place of society of men, where there is not need of wise men's advice and interposition, which some invidiously brand by the phrase of putting their fingers into the fire. To these wise men one may well apply the text, *It is better to put a finger into the fire, than having all one's fingers safe to be cast into hell-fire*; for that it will come to; *Take and cast the unprofitable servant into outer darkness*, Mat. xxv. 30. The particular account of the servant's wickedness, is his slothfulness and unprofitableness.

Poor fools! One would pity them that have a prize put into their hands, and know not how to improve it. But these wicked wise men, who will pity, that have a prize put into their hands, and will not improve it?

Every man ought to esteem all his endowments as a common good, in which all mankind

has some interest. He that wrapped up his talent in a napkin, was to his lord as if he had embezzled it.

The covetous, of whom it is expressly said that God abhors them, though they have neither child or brother, and have abundantly enough for themselves, yet are griping and heaping, and love riches for riches' sake.

And are not they somewhat akin to them, that scrape together a great deal of wisdom, and learning, merely for their own pleasure, and satisfaction; by which no body shall be the better, but themselves; and indeed themselves the worse; *for to him that knows to do good and does it not, to him it is sin.*

The industry of the bee is to be commended in gathering honey; but her sensuality in eating it all up, and invidiousness in forbidding others to partake of it, spoils her character.

To bring forth a cluster now and then will not serve to denominate a man fruitful. There must be a proportion between wisdom and communication. *To whom much is given, of him much shall be required.* The heavenly wisdom is full of good fruits.

Communication is the wise man's charity, *Such as I have, I give thee.* The poor wise man's charity was his advice, *Eccles.* ix. And it is almost as good in earnest, as it was in jest, *Scire tuum nihil est, nisi,* &c. [thy knowledge is of no value, unless another knows it.]

Lord settle this persuasion in my heart, that I was not born, nor any way accomplished for myself alone; and that nothing is to be sought or

desired as an ornament and embellishment of my own particular being, but as a common good; which every one that needs, has some title to, as well as I! And that although it is a pleasant life to live in the meditation and love of God, yet that an active life, and a life of communication, is no less amiable and loving too. Oh give me a store of things new and old to communicate, a free heart to communicate them, and an aptitude to do it; that I may neither be an empty vessel, nor as a full vessel sealed up, nor as a vessel unsealed, but wanting vent; but full, free, and having a faculty to communicate!

MEDITATION XC.

Of partiality, and partial wisdom.

To value any party or person more than truth or equity, is a branch of worldly love, and a symptom of a worldly mind.

God is an impartial estimator, and will be an impartial judge. He has often declared himself ἀπροσωπολήπτης, and we ought to resemble him. He will neither favour the rich in judgment, nor pity the poor; but righteous and unrighteous shall divide the world.

Oh that this doctrine were thoroughly believed. Great men would not then think of breaking through, as they do now; and poor men would not hope to skulk, and be overlooked.

It is not partiality to esteem one man above another, according as they are valuable for true worth.

To value men or things according to truth, as they deserve, is a perfection; God does so. Different dealings with men, is not sinful partiality, when they deserve to be differently dealt with. To discriminate between a penitent, and tender-hearted offender, and an obstinate one, in administering correction, is a sort of justice, not partiality, because gentle usage and a moderation of punishment is due to their temper.

But to estimate persons by any carnal or secular consideration, or to favour them for selfish and worldly advantages, or to prefer the maintaining of a party, because it maintains us; the defence of an opinion, because we have espoused it, before truth and righteousness, is partiality.

Partial wisdom finds out wiles and ways to excuse that in a man's self, which he would condemn and punish in another, and to punish that in one whom he hates, which he would not punish in himself, or any person beloved. Thus partial was the patriarch Judah; he had a mind to punish that fault in his daughter-in-law, which he himself was most guilty of, *Bring her forth and let her be burnt.*

Partial wisdom instructs men to find out arguments to defend a party that they live by; a craft that they get their wealth by; an opinion that custom or worldly interest commands them to support.

What is all that witty rhetoric, that cunning logic, which the Papists use to defend the way and doctrine of the church, in whose bosom they lie, and are kept warm, but so many instances of this partial wisdom. They seek the prosper-

ity of Babylon, merely because in her prosperity themselves do prosper.

Lord, grant that truth may be the standard, by which I may weigh and measure, estimate and judge of all things! That I may know no interest, but the interest of righteousness, to command my apprehensions and sentiments; no worldly bias to pervert the regular and steady motions of my judgment or affections! That I may judge of all things as they are; and of those that are, according to God!

MEDITATION XCI.

Of hypocrisy in general.

Hypocrisy is an artificial kind of lying. God is truth, and he abhors hypocrites and hypocrisy; that is, they are directly contrary to his nature

The general notion of hypocrisy is, pretending to be, and have, and do, what one is not, hath not, doth not.

This is not simply, and in itself evil. Have we not read what David did, 1 *Chron.* xiv. and that by Divine command; and the Israelites in the civil wars against Benjamin, how they pretended to run away, but did not, and yet were guiltless.

Nay, God himself sometimes makes things to seem otherwise than they are; as when he made the waters to seem like blood, to bring in the Moabites to battle, and made the Babylonians to hear noise of war, when there was no enemy.

But this hypocrisy becomes sinful by accident, (established by use,) by some ill attendants, or ill designs in the action.

It is not absolutely sinful for a man to dissemble his person; for a wise man to seem as if he understood not, for a fool to seem understanding, for a rich man to dissemble his riches, or a poor man his poverty. Christ Jesus himself sometimes concealed his purposes, and made show of the contrary; as in the case of the disciples going to Emmaus.

But this dissembling becomes evil, by evil accidents; and is carnal, if it be attended with pride, unbelief, slavish fear, atheisticalness, or if it serve a *dolus malus*, [an evil design.]

The king of Israel might disguise himself, and go into the battle; but if he think to escape the eye, or escape the hand of God by this means, his atheisticalness, not his hypocrisy, is sinful.

The queen of Israel might disguise herself and seem another woman; but if she think to deceive the prophet, or the God of the prophet, therein she is atheistical.

It was not Saul's disguising himself, but his consulting with the devil, that was his sin.

What was extraordinary in David's dissembling before Achish, and Jacob's before Isaac, I know not; but there seems to be so much in it, that I had rather excuse them charitably, than boldly imitate either of them.

This sinful hypocrisy is either in things civil or religious.

The civil hypocrisy may be very wicked, and a symptom of an earthly mind.

As when men profess and pretend to trades, arts or sciences, which they understand not; when men profess to be teachers of others, when themselves had need to be taught. Hereby they deceive men, in imposing false wares or doctrines on them:

Or when men pretend to love and friendship, on purpose to deceive, to make men less jealous to trust them, and rely on them ——— *per amici fallere nomen*, [by the name of a friend to deceive.]

Abner died as a fool, that is, by deceit, as the manner of fools is to perish.

Or when men pretend much love and kindness, and yet mean no such thing; but do fail them to whom they pretend it:

Or pretend much love, on purpose to make a prey of men; as the harlot in the Proverbs of Solomon, *Prov.* xxx. 20.

MEDITATION XCII.

Of Scripture hypocrisy, and hypocritical wisdom.

The hypocrisy which the Scripture so often condemns, and so vehemently inveighs against, is in short a pretending to that religion which indeed a man has not. And this is done two ways, by the amolition or putting away of vice, and by the ostentation of virtue.

In general, all Christians, (taken in opposition to heathens,) that are not renewed in the spirit

of their minds, nor conformed to the image of Christ, are hypocrites.

All professors of religion, that profess the true God, are entered into a covenant relation, are baptized into the name of Christ, have taken on them to fight for him against the world, the flesh, and the devil, and yet are strangers to true regeneration, are of a worldly spirit, and a fleshly mind, are hypocrites.

We use indeed to distinguish between the profane and the hypocrites; and the profane bless themselves that they are not hypocrites, they think they do not act deceitfully in their profession, because they make no profession at all. This were a miserable excuse, if it were true, but it is false; for they do profess Christianity, and by being concerned in the sacraments of the Gospel, do undertake the duties of the Gospel, and lay claim to the blessings of it. Nay, they themselves will tell you, That they hope to be saved, as well as the greatest professors of them all. And surely they cannot think to be saved by a Gospel which they do not own.

It seems as if hell were inhabited with these two sorts of people, hypocrites and unbelievers; as if the text should say, Unbelievers and false believers, heathens and Christians; for there must be a kind of believing to make up a hypocrite. So then, profaneness does not hinder men from being hypocrites; it only makes them the more gross and impudent dissemblers, the more notorious mockers of God.

To profess religion and virtue, is not of itself hypocrisy, but indeed the necessary duty

of all men, especially of those to whom the Gospel is come; but because the profession of religion has been so abused, therefore some think it best to make none at all; or rather, indeed, it is an argument of the great hatred that wicked men bear to religion, that they hate the very name and show of it, as they say the panther does the very image of a man.

To desire to appear virtuous is not simply hypocrisy. A man may both love religion, and love the beautiful character of religion too. To be virtuous is for our own good; to appear such is for the good of others, and for the glory of God, *Matt.* v. 16.

To be zealous for religion, and the promoting of it, is not hypocrisy; however it is traduced by some, and suspected by more. True, indeed, all is not zeal, pure zeal for religion, that seems so. But yet there is a zeal for religion, and wherever it is in truth it is highly commendable. Alas! What a careless and graceless age are we fallen into, wherein men's hearts are so coldly disposed towards religion, that it should be accounted ecstacy or hypocrisy to be zealous for the interest of religion, which yet all profess, and many profess to be their greatest glory.

It is not simply hypocrisy for a man to conceal his faults. That which was Sodom's shame cannot be our duty surely, to proclaim our sin. The next to being innocent, is to be ashamed of our faults. And who will exhibit a thing that he is ashamed of?

But to pretend to a religion which we have not, nor care not to have; to profess it, or any

part of it for worldly ends, and so to make it subservient to carnal selfishness; to desire to be approved of men for any grace or virtue, and in the mean time not to approve ourselves to God in the exercise thereof, is the more special, sinful hypocrisy.

And this hypocrisy is very cunning. Many wiles men use to serve hypocrisy, and to seem what they are not.

One instance of this worldly hypocritical wisdom is, when men either deny or mince their sins, that they may appear righteous before men, when in the mean time they love them, and live in them. Nay, rather than not cover their sins, they will make a cloak of the vail of the sanctuary. Thus the dissembling Pharisees in our Saviour's days made long prayers to hide their covetousness, and covered their uncharitableness, and undutifulness with the pretence of *corban.* The same worldly wisdom instructs the hypocrite to bann and swagger against sin in general, and the sins of other men, in the mean time hugging his own. For would not any one think that he that preaches frequently and severely against covetousness, were some charitable and heavenly soul? If a man had seen Jehu raging and hectoring against Baal, would he not have thought that he had perfectly abhorred idolatry? But follow him to Dan or Bethel, and you would be of another mind. A great artifice whereby men make their own sins seem little or none at all, is to represent other men's as big as may be. Thus I have heard some men excuse their own swearing by aggravating other men's

lying and deceitfulness; their own formality and carelessness in religion, by railing against the hypocrisy and heady zeal of another sort of men. And indeed nothing is more usual than to endeavour to drown the cry of the sins of the present times, by talking loudly of the crying sins of the former. Oh, cried the Jews, Our fathers, what wicked men were they to kill the prophets! when themselves persecuted and hated the great Prophet of the church. Another great instance of hypocrisy is, when men assume to themselves an ostentatious religion, and do not heartily embrace nor love it. The worldly wisdom has invented a great many artifices in this matter. Sometimes the hypocritical wisdom will instruct men to commend virtue and virtuous persons, to seem virtuous. Yea, it will preach up many good works, and press them most confidently, (I had almost said impudently,) with many arguments and motives, that they will not meddle with the practice of; bind severe duties on their hearers, which themselves will not touch with one of their fingers. Who has not, with astonishment and loathing, heard the loose and careless exhort to devotion and diligent godliness; the covetous to liberality; the heedless require others to pray continually; and the profane charge the rest that they swear not at all.

This wisdom will instruct men to pray, (especially if it be in a public place, where they may do it *clare et ut audiat hospes*,) [distinctly, and so that a stranger may hear,] for many good gifts and graces, which they have no mind to receive; to be enabled to do many good things, which yet

they never so much as once go about, and to be adorned with that holiness which they deride and hate in them that are adorned with it.

Sometimes the hypocritical wisdom instructs men to take a good and constant care of their outward behaviour and conversation, that it be demure, and sober, and honest, and as to any scandalous thing unexceptionable. All this is good, and yet is nothing but an artifice of the hypocritical wisdom, if the heart in the mean time be full of pride and covetousness, malice and revengefulness, impurity and impatience; if the will be selfish, and reluctant against the will of God. This was the devilish wisdom of the hypocrites of old, whom the wisdom of Heaven detected, and told them, That notwithstanding their sheep's clothing, they were inwardly ravening wolves; notwithstanding their outward cleanliness, and many washings, they were inwardly full of excess and rapine; notwithstanding their external whitings and garnishings, they were inwardly corrupt and rotten.

Another artifice to seem religious, is to be scrupulous of little faults, and zealous for lighter duties; not but that tenderness of conscience, and zeal for all the commands of God, are excellent accomplishments; but they are nothing but an artifice of the hypocritical wisdom, when at the same time the great and camel-like sins are swallowed down, and the weighty matters of the law are neglected.

O take heed of coming into the judgment hall, for fear of being defiled; but venture to condemn and hang the innocent, if you envy him.

Be as punctual as may be in paying the tythes to the Levite, so exact as to be a cutter of cummin, but it is no great matter for faith and the love of God. All the art is here, to find out what is really little or light; for according to men's prejudices, a little variation in ceremony or order, must needs be interpreted a sin as mortal as blasphemy; and on the other hand, a seemly, handsome, ceremonious observation, have as great weight laid on it, as the love of God and our neighbour.

Oh that God would give us to see the necessities of our own souls, the nature of true substantial holines, that transforms us into the image of God; to eye the example of Christ, who was not wont to lay stress on little things! And, Oh Lord, that we may all see how odious hypocrisy is to truth; and that if the show of holiness be desirable, itself must needs be much more beautiful!

MEDITATION XCIII.

Of the god of this world.

Among other worldly things, I read of the god of this world, and the prince of this world; whom to adore and obey, is certainly a symptom of a worldly mind.

The Eternal Jehovah is the rightful and only proper God and Prince of the world; but yet, by an improper speech, the devil is also called, the god of this world, 2 *Cor.* iv. 4.

He is thus called either by a metonymy of the adjunct, or by a metaphor.

By a metonymy, a thing is said to be that, which it is only in opinion, κατα δοξαν, [according to estimation,] not κατ' αλήθειαν, [according to truth.] And thus the devil is the God of this world in his own opinion; for he boasts himself as such, Matt. iv. 8, 9. *All these things will I give thee;* and Luke iv. 6, 7. *All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them, for that is delivered unto me, and to whomsoever I will I give it;* and in the opinion of men, who take and worship him for God; as the dog is said to be the god of Egypt, because it is worshipped by them instead of God; and the belly is said to be the god of Epicures, *Phil.* iii. 19.

Or else by a metaphor. The name of God is metaphorically applied to the devil; for as the true God administers his kingdom of grace in believers, and is devoutly worshipped by them, so the devil worketh his malignant works in the hearts of wicked men, and is obeyed by the children of disobedience, *Eph.* ii. 2. That is god to every man which he doth most esteem and advance in his heart. And so, although there is really a difference between God and Mammon, yet it may be metaphorically said, that Mammon is the god of covetous men.

When I consider how often in Scripture things are said to be that which they only seem to be, or are taken to be, either by a man's self or others, I cannot but wonder at the unreasonable clamour that some people make; not sticking to rail at us for lying and equivocating, when we

thus speak. If the Spirit of God had not authorized and consecrated this expression, of the devil's being the god of this world, how may we imagine that the pretenders to simplicity and propriety of speech, would have hooted it out of the world for blasphemy.

And methinks the necessity of human learning, and particularly of rhetoric, may fairly be commended and established from this consideration.

There are so many passages of this nature in Scripture, that I cannot but record some of them, to stop the mouths of irrhetorical censurers.

The diabolical spectrum is expressly called Samuel, which was only so φαινομένως, [apparently,] 1 *Sam.* xxviii. 12. Hananiah is called a prophet, *Jer.* xxviii. because he was accounted for such. And so is Epimenides called by the apostle, *Tit.* i. 12. the prophet of the Cretans; for, as Laertius tells us, he was so accounted of by them, and after his death they sacrificed to him.

Joseph is called the father of Jesus, *Luke* ii. 48. only because he was so reputed, as the text afterwards confesses, *Luke* iii. 23.

The preaching of the Gospel is called foolishness, 1 *Cor.* i. 2. only because it was so in the judgment of the wise men of the world.

We read of *clouds without water, and wandering stars*, Jude 12, 13. whereas philosophers will not yield that those are νεφέλαι, but say they are mere ἐμψύχλαι, nor properly stars, but inflammations of the dry air extended, resembling falling stars.

Ivory is often called the elephant's tooth, wherein Varro saith, The Scripture accommodateth itself to the vulgar opinion, affirming that they are horns having their root in the temples of the beasts, and bending down through the upper jaw, rise again, and so resemble teeth. It is evident that ivory is softened by fire, which does not agree to teeth, but horn. The text seems elsewhere to speak out, *Ezek.* xxvii. 15. and calls them *the horns of ivory.* It is said, *Mark* vi. 48. that Christ would have passed by the poor distressed disciples, when he only seemed as though he would. Paul's shipmen deemed that some country drew near to them, *Acts* xxvii. 27, that is indeed, that they drew near to some country; spoken, according to appearance, like that of the poet,

Provehimur portu, terræque urbesque recedunt.

[We are borne from the harbour, and lands and cities retire.]

They come from the end of heaven, says the prophet, Isa. xiii. 5. A speech borrowed from the opinion of the vulgar, who, following the judgment of their eyes, think that the heavens are but hemispherical, and do end at the utmost parts of the earth, upon which the extremities of heaven seem to them to rest. With allusion to which vulgar opinion, (how false soever,) the mountains are said to be the foundations of the heavens, 2 *Sam.* xxii. 8. and the pillars of heaven, *Job* xxvi. 11; because it seems as if the heavens rested on them, as on foundations or pillars.

But to return from this digression. The devil is the god of this world, and all his followers are worldly men.

These, for method sake, I will briefly meditate of under three ranks, viz. The servants, the children, and the confederates of the devil.

By servants of the devil, I mean idolaters, that serve dumb idols as they are led, and know not the living God.

By his children, I mean all that imitate him, and are of his wicked nature, though they be not idolaters.

By his allies, I mean such as are in a formal covenant with him, who consult his pleasure, and act by his power and skill.

To the first he is a kind of high priest, by whom they expect reconciliation and atonement; to the second a king; and to the third a prophet. So he is a prophet, priest, and king, of worldly men.

MEDITATION XCIV.

Of Idolatry.

That the servants of the god of this world are worldly men, will not be doubted by any; but, possibly, it will be doubted who are his servants. All wicked men that love and work the works of darkness and uncleanness, are indeed his servants; but they are in Scripture also called his children, therefore I shall refer that general consideration of them to that head. More especially, idolatry is the service of the devil, and idolaters are his servants.

It is most generally supposed, that the apostasy and ruin of the devils, was their aspiring to be as God. And the highest pitch of pride is described by this. This was the satanical suggestion that prevailed with Eve to eat the forbidden fruit, *Ye shall be as God, knowing good and evil.*

Though the devil failed then, and miscarried foully in his attempt; yet such is the pride of his nature, and his envy and malignity against God, that still it is his desire to be taken for a god.

He has prevailed with many, so to be esteemed and worshipped; if not for love, yet for fear; as they report of the Indians that worship him, *Ne noceat*, lest he should do them a mischief.

He has put off himself to some as a great benefactor to mankind, and so has obtained a reverential worship. The devil at Delphos had obtained so much reputation, as the people generally consulted him about future contingencies, which is a divine honour, and sacrifice to him there and elsewhere.

It was the pride of the devil that suggested to the philosophers a twofold eternal principle, *Boni et Mali*, [of good and evil,] to make himself an anti-deity, rather to be the god of mischief, than no god at all.

And from the same proud nature it was, that he directed all the ancient heathens to feign a god of hell, as well as of heaven; a Pluto, as well as Jupiter.

Whether it was his pride or malice that put him upon tempting Christ, to fall down and wor-

ship him, I cannot tell; but certainly he must needs have an high opinion of himself, that durst make such a bold motion to the Son of God. Yea, grant him to be such a fool, as not to know him to be the Son of God; it must needs argue a proud conceit of himself, to suggest such a thing to any son of man that was in his right wits.

It must be confessed, this is the grossest sort of idolatry; and, possibly, some will deny that it is possible that any should be so gross as to commit it. But the apostle puts it out of doubt, saying, *The things that the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, not to God.*

There are indeed other sorts of idolatry more common, when men worship the sun and moon for gods; or intentionally, and yet remotely worship the true God, by the medium of images made with hands. To think these images are gods, is exceeding gross; and yet it should seem by the prophet Isaiah, as if some were so gross as to esteem them so. But suppose they only fancy that these images are only inhabited by some special presence of the Deity, still it is idolatry, and an interpretative worshipping of the devil; for it is a service that God has forbidden, and the devil invented.

Nay, suppose these images to be only monitory, and to be of no further use, than to put in mind of God, or to excite devotion; yet how can it escape the brand of idolatrous will-worship? For who has required this at men's hands? Yea, who knoweth not, that God hath flatly forbidden the worshipping of him by the likeness of any thing in heaven or earth, or under the earth?

This, I suppose, was the case of the golden calves, which no one ever imagined to resemble the Deity, nor to be inspired or inhabited by him; only they served to put in mind of God, and excite devotion. And yet this moscholatry was cursed and abhorred of God; and so were all those that were addicted to it.

And art thou so gross, O my soul, and so sunk into matter, that thou canst not see God, except thou look out at the eyes of the body! Canst thou not direct thy devotions to the invisible God, except thou fix thy corporal sight upon matter? Be ashamed, O noble spirit, of the imputation of such grossness and weakness, and be afraid of such boldness; lest the jealous God should interpret that damnable idolatry, which possibly thou art not convinced of, but yet hast a suspicion of, and at best hast no need of. Canst thou not as well worship and pray to the invisible God, without the help of a monitory image, as love and delight in thy absent friend, without the assistance of his picture, or a present? How dost thou think to see and serve God shortly, when thy bodily eyes shall be full of dust, and all corporal organs so utterly out of tune, that thou shalt not be able to make use of any of them? Do that now, which thou must do then.

And if there be any need of any monitor, of any visible help to devotion, (inasmuch as in this complex state, I find my soul to be much afflicted by my senses, or at least, that it does desire and depend upon their help and direction) Lord, from what object should I rather look for direction and admonition, than from those that do most

clearly represent thy infinite power and wisdom! The things that thou hast made do more clearly demonstrate the invisible things of thee, even thy eternal power and Godhead, than all the productions of mortal men can do. Shall I, that have the heavens above me, the seas round about me, and the earth under my feet, need any human figment to represent thee to me, or admonish me of thy divine perfections?

If I must needs have an image, is not this glorious, beautiful world a more excellent, a more lively one, than any thing that man can make of gold, that is one of the meanest things in it? That very light, yea, if it be but the light of a candle, whereby I may see my monitory image, has more in it to admonish me of my God, and direct me to him, than the image that I see by it.

Lord, help me devoutly and seriously to observe and contemplate the operation of thy hands; to regard the footsteps of thy power, wisdom, and goodness in the whole creation; to rise up by every thing that I see, and hear, and taste, to the meditation and love of thy name; and by all these, to excite myself to a dependance upon thy power and goodness! And then, I shall find no need of admonition, direction, or excitation from any workmanship of man; the finest of which, is by no means so worthy of regard or worship, as the skill of the mechanist that made it.

MEDITATION XCV.

Of formal witchcraft.

The second sort of the devil's followers are his allies, that are in covenant with him, either formal or implicit.

It is credibly reported to us, by those that have heard the confessions of witches, that there are some who have so perfectly put off human nature, that they have entered into a covenant with the devil, a league with hell; so as to profess to put their trust in the devil, to be obedient to him, to depend on him for assistance, to pray unto him, to consult him in all difficulties. And for ratification of this covenant, they have signed articles written with their own blood, or given him a kind of possession of themselves, by yielding themselves to be nurses to the impure spirits. And yet these are professed Christians. And others, that have been so great with the devil, as to entertain him for their bedfellow; these impure spirits, in their assumed bodies, dallying with mortals both as Incubi and Succubæ. I will not stand to question the generation of those heroes that are ascribed to Jupiter, Apollo, and the rest of them.

This, if any thing, is, as the ancient philosophy speaks, μεταβαινειν εις ἀλλο γενος. [to change into another race.] And men are disposed and prepared thereunto, by that spiritual acquaintance and converse which they have with the devil, by the lusts of pride, covetousness, envy and revenge.

We read of some that have been so transported with pride, that they have entered into a formal covenant with the devil, to be eminently instructed in some art, or indued with something that they accounted a great accomplishment. And it is not to be doubted, but that he is a great scholar, and has a singular faculty in communicating.

Others have been so mad upon the world, that they have devoted themselves to the god of this world, to be enriched by him. And, no doubt of it, he is as good at this as any Mercury or Hercules of old was supposed to be; both in recovering for them the things that they themselves had lost, or causing them to find things lost or hidden by others.

Others, to gratify their envy and revengefulness, have confessed that they have bargained with the great Abaddon or Apollyon; who has accordingly (when the righteous Governor of the world has been pleased to permit him) executed their malice upon the goods, children, and persons of such as they have hated.

When the devil espies any one of a discontented, troubled, raging mind, full of wrath and jealousies, and blasphemies against God, or fretful envy and malice against men, then is he ready to offer his service, and to give his hand in a way of assistance, if they will give him their hand in a way of covenant. And so the bargain, the fatal bargain is struck up, and the miserable soul is gratified to its own destruction.

Neither need it seem strange. The transition is easy; for having already obtained a possession

of the soul, need it seem hard for him to get a possession of the body, (for so I reckon he has of witches;) having engaged their hearts, it is easy to suppose he may get them to set to their hands.

Neither need it seem strange, that God in his righteous judgment should suffer them to give up themselves to the father of lies, to believe him, and believe in him too, who have been long wilfully disobedient to the truth; that they should be suffered to enter into a covenant with hell, who wilfully burst the bonds of Heaven, and violate their covenant with God.

Lord, what swift progress does sin make in the souls of men, in how short a time do the shades of hell overspread the whole face of the soul! Of how great moment is it to resist the wicked one in his first insinuations, and to pluck up those seeds, that when they are grown up, will make such snares for the soul!

O my heart, give all dilligence to keep thyself pure. If it may be, entertain not the first motions of pride, covetousness, revenge, or discontent. However, take heed of sitting upon the cockatrice eggs, lest thou hatch them into serpents, deadly serpents.

MEDITATION XCVI.

Of interpretative witchcraft.

Besides this gross and formal witchcraft, there is another sort not so gross and palpable, which

yet denominates men allies to the god of this world.

There are among men allies by covenants, articles, and formal ratification. And there are also allies by kindness, of interest, and faithful correspondence. So it is here. There are many that keep correspondence with the evil spirit, that have not articled with him, or delivered themselves up to him by a formal covenant.

I dare not positively conclude, that the spirit of prophecy has quite forsaken the world. But I apprehend there is not much need of it, since the perfecting of the canon of the Scripture. I suppose it is very rare, (if it be at all,) and that it only rests upon pure and holy minds, and on very weighty occasions.

Whether the skilful may astrologically or chiromantically guess at the future state of nations or persons, has been disputed often among learned men. And for my part, I do not see such convincing arguments on either part, as to adventure to interpose.

I do believe that the devil can tell many things which we cannot, and that he is very officious to them that consult him. But withal I think that no man ought to consult him, though it were an important case, as king Saul's was. For he is the grand apostate and rebel against God. And the loyal subjects of the Almighty commit a kind of treason, to keep any correspondence with the wicked one.

Besides, it is wonderfully unsafe to be so great with him; for his *Dona*, are *Hamata;* [gifts, or baits, have hooks concealed in them,] and his

very gratification of our curiosity, only serves to a further and pernicious acquaintance. It is not likely he will communicate his skill for nothing, nor his secrets, without a further secret design of making his clients to be his votaries.

Besides, it is imprudent. For his sworn enmity against man is such, that no man can be assured but he will deceive him. He will be true to his clients in one thing, that he may deceive them in many. Nay, by this ambiguous nature, he often deceives, even in speaking the truth.

As for necromancy, I confess I know not what converse separate souls do hold with the embodied; neither know I whether it pleases God at any time to send any of them, or suffer them to come among us on any errand of his, or of their own. But I believe it is out of the power of the devil to disturb, or employ any blessed souls on his errand. And if by his interest one might come to an acquaintance with some of the other sort, it were unwarrantable and unsafe, and indeed superfluous too; for why should he be employed to fetch another person to tell a thing, which himself can tell better?

But besides all these, there are ordinarily a sort of bold people, that consult the devil blindfolded, and are a kind of conjurers, and do not know it. Such (at least,) I take all the augures and aruspices, and priestly persons of old to have been, who consulted the entrails of beasts, the flying of birds, and the like, thereby to know future contingent events. And among ourselves there are many that use rites and ceremonies, words and phrases, of which no rational account

can be given, which nothing in the Scripture divinity does direct. I confess if God do propound or direct a thing, of which we can give no philosophical acccount, yet it is to be believed. If the true prophet, whose authenticity was well known, bade, *Go and wash in Jordan;* If Christ dressed the eyes of the blind man with mortar, it is not to be wondered at nor disbelieved. But when we have no divine authority, nor can give any philosophical account, it is very suspicious and hazardous.

It is observed by some, that the devil loves to be believed at a venture, such is his pride. And that he loves to be worshipped in the dark, his best servants being they that do his will without inquiring into the reason of his commands; whereas God loves to be conversed with in a way of light and understanding.

And that the devil should give life and operation, and signification to his own institutions, and be virtually present by his influences, to deceive the simple, or gratify the curious, needs not to be wondered at. Many stories tell how fain he would be reputed a god, as we have partly seen before; and therefore he courts the implicit faith of men, and their blind obedience.

Aaron cast the ear-rings into the fire, and *there came out this calf.* How far the devil might assist in this action, I cannot tell; but it is easy to believe he does assist in the curious inquiries, and unwary attempts of astrological men, and others, and enables them by his unseen hand to predict and perform many things, which yet they never give him thanks for; but either ascribe

to some false natural cause, or wonder at, as a stupendous secret, of which no account can be given.

The merciful Jesus apprehended little Zaccheus climbing up into the tree, out of mere curiosity to see him, and brought salvation to him. The cruel Apollyon is courteous also, to gratify the curiosity of vain men, and meet them half the way, and go home with them too; but it is not to bring salvation to them, but them to damnation.

Blessed God, heal me of all licentiousness and unsubduedness of understanding! Clothe me with humility, that I may be wise according to what is written; both on this side heaven, and on this side hell; lest by over-daring on the one hand, I provoke thee to blind me; or on the other hand, tempt the devil to enlighten me. And as I am a reasonable creature, so grant that I may always act rationally; not smothering the candle of the Lord set up in my soul, not quitting the guidance of it, to be led in ways of darkness and blind mazes, wherein I can neither walk with safety nor satisfaction!

O my soul, put not out thine eyes, lest thy grand enemy catch thee, (as they caught Sampson of old,) and make sport with thee; yea, make a drudge of thee to grind in his mill. Go no further in thy inquiries or experiments, than thou canst feel firm ground to set thy foot on, than thou canst discern thy way; lest in thy unwary and licentious ramblings, thou be spirited, as many silly children are; caught up and defiled, as it

happened to the daughter of Jacob, who was first unwary, then unchaste.

MEDITATION XCVII.

Of the children of the devil, and particularly of self-will.

The third sort of the devil's followers, for distinction sake, I call his children; a phrase authorized by the Spirit of God, and therefore not to be rejected.

But here, for distinctness in proceeding, I must consider the devil under a double notion, viz. as a particular being, an apostate spirit; or a corrupt nature, or the spirit of apostasy.

Thus I think the Scripture considers him; sometimes as an apostate spirit, as in Job ii. and Mat. iv. and frequently in the Gospel, where he is said to be cast out of the bodies of demoniacs. Sometimes as a nature or spirit of apostasy, the spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience. So learned interpreters by the context, interpret that of the apostle, *Resist the devil*, &c. and that of our Saviour, *Get thee behind me, Satan.*

This need not seem strange; for so the Scripture speaks in other cases. Thus it speaks of Christ frequently as a person, in the whole history of his life; sometimes as a new and divine nature, *Christ formed in you*, and *Christ in you the hope of glory.* The like may be said of antichrist. The spirit of deceit and delusion is called antichrist; *This is a deceiver, and an antichrist.*

These apostate spirits (for there are many of them) are frequently spoken of in Scripture in the singular number, and called the devil, the wicked one, and Satan, although there be devils many, and Satans many. The reason of this, I conceive, is either because one and the same principle of rebellion and malignity actuates them all, as if they were but one person. Or one is called the devil by way of eminence, as being ring-leader and prince of devils. Or in opposition to God who is but one, the wicked spirits are called the devil, to make the opposition the plainer, between the two principles of good and evil, the two kingdoms of light and darkness.

This apostate spirit, though he have no issue of his own body, yet is said to have many children among those that are properly the children of men.

The apostle John makes their number very great, when he divides the whole world into the children of God and the children of the devil, 1 *John.* iii. Our Saviour, whose reflections were always very modest, yet makes their number very considerable, when he affirms to the whole generation of the malignant Jews, *Ye are of your father the devil;* therefore they must needs be his children.

According to the Hebrew idiom of speech, persons and things are said to be the children of those whom they most resemble. For resemblance seems to result from the relation of a child to his parent; and therefore they lie under some suspicion of illegitimacy, who carry nothing of their parents about with them, but their names only.

Thus they are the children of God, who do the works of God, *John* viii. 41. Who are followers of him, as the apostle speaks. They are the children of Abraham, who imitate the faith and piety of Abraham, *John* viii. and the daughters of Sarah, who resemble her, 1 *Pet.* iii. 6. Whose daughters ye are, so long as ye do well. Thus men are called the children of the devil, *Ob simile pravitatis ingenium et imitationem*, [for imitating him, and possessing a similar disposition to sin.]

And, Oh good God, what a numerous offspring has this apostate spirit! How great a part of earth is inhabited with the children of hell! Of the proud, envious, false, malicious, contentious, and others, who are the children of the devil, I have already meditated.

Besides all which, I find two things more that make men much like to that wicked one, and denominate them his children, *viz.* self-will, and ingratitude.

Self-will, or the unsubduedness of our own will to the will of God, expressing itself in discontent, fretfulness, murmuring, or impatience, is the express image of that apostate, proud, restless spirit. The heathens expressed this wicked temper, by an elegant invention, of the giants, the sons of the earth, making war against Heaven. Away with fables, says Lipsius somewhere, *Vos queruli ii estis*, [ye are those very complainers.] The impatient, querulous, and self-willed, are those monsters, that do indeed take up arms against God, and rebelliously oppose the sovereignty of Heaven. Oh the divine and lovely temper of the blessed Jesus,

who, in the sharpest case, in the bitterest cup, showed forth the exinanition of his own will—*Not my will, but thy will be done.*

Oh, dear Redeemer, redeem me also from the remainder of all enmity and opposition, that I may account the will of my heavenly Father absolutely pure and perfect, and more eligible than my own, if I were left to my choice! Yea, rather, that I may be so perfectly swallowed up in the divine will, that I may have no will of my own, distinct from his; but that, as a true friend of God, (Oh sweet character,) I may love and abhor the very same things with him!

MEDITATION XCVIII.

Of Ingratitude.

The proper notion of ingratitude is, not to be sensible of a good turn done to us, when we know it.

Nothing can excuse ingratitude but ignorance. Impotence cannot. A man may be grateful, although he cannot act, no nor speak.

Ingratitude is the most notorious when it is malignant, and wishes ill, or does ill to a person that we know has done us good.

To proceed justly against any benefactor, is not simply ingratitude; for my love to truth and righteousness ought to prevail against any particular affections, or the sense of any personal kindness. And yet gratitude will oblige me to abate something of my own interest, and to be

more remiss in the prosecution of my private injury.

But to be injurious to a person that I am beholden to, adds ingratitude to injustice. This is the very natural complexion of the devil, who hates the God from whom he has received his very being.

All sin in man wilfully committed against God, has ingratitude in it; but especially the rebellious disposition of the devil, who knows when he sins, and has received greater obligations from God than mankind.

What greater obligation could God have laid on any creature than he laid on the devil, in creating him in so happy a state, and of so noble a capacity; his extraction divine, his capacity large, his condition not only happy, but glorious? And now for the son of the morning to despise his own native glory and brightness, and sink into sin and hellish darkness; to forsake his own mercies, and to be still endeavouring to put himself, and poor mankind, out of a capacity of receiving mercies; to fall from the glorious image of his Creator, and then to hate and oppose it wherever it is found; to take up arms against the eternal God, from whom he had his very being and existence; to fly from the very light, and hate love itself. Lord, what created understanding can comprehend such horrible ingratitude!

And Oh poor wretched man, how dost thou resemble this black and devilish temper! Whose ingratitude, if thy obligations had been equal to his, would have been as great; and if thou refuse the offers of mercy made to thee by a Re-

deemer, which are not made to him, will be accounted greater. What a generation of vipers is mankind become, who do what in them lies to be the death of him who gave them life!

Lord, do I well to be angry at the affronts and injuries, the neglects and unkindnesses done to me by those of whom I have deserved well! Let the sense of my own more abominable ingratitude towards thee, abate my resentment of their's towards me!

Is not the wilful profaner of the Sabbath an ungrateful wretch, to deny one day to his Maker, who gives him six for one?

Is it not shamefully ungrateful, by oaths and blasphemies, to speak evil of him by whom alone it is that we speak at all? To murmur against him, for taking away any thing, who gives us all things? To lift up ourselves proudly against him, by whom we stand; and to brave it against him, from whom we receive all our excellencies?

Is it not proportionably shameful ingratitude for children to dishonour, neglect, or hate their parents, the immediate instruments of their very beings? For subjects to rebel and conspire against their kind princes, by whom they enjoy great quietness, and by whose providence worthy deeds are done to the nation? For people to let their pastors starve for want of their carnal things, who administer to them of their spiritual things? For pupils and scholars to spit out that learning in the faces of their tutors and masters, which they received from them? For those that are ransomed from the gallows to be the first in cutting the throat of him that ran-

somed them? For the poor abjects, whom Job fed with his morsel and clad with his fleece, to abhor him in his calamity, and spit in his honourable face?

Nay, is it not shameful ingratitude for any man to forget, or ill requite, the kindness of his neighbour or equal?

For Pharaoh's butler to forget the afflictions of Joseph, who had but foretold good concerning him, is branded with disingenuousness. What brand deserve they then, that forget the good that is done to them, done with care, with cost, perhaps with hazard too? Of these Job complained, David complained, Samuel complained, and Moses complained; men of whom one might almost say, they never complained of any thing else. All these good men were almost provoked to be angry at the observation of this ill temper, as may appear by David's rash resolution to cut off Nabal, and his house; *In vain have I kept all that this fellow hath in the wilderness*, &c. *and he hath requited me evil for good.*

It is made an argument of the singular meekness of Moses, that he endured so ungrateful a people. And God himself undertakes to comfort Samuel in his resentment of the ingratitude of the Israelites, by taking it on himself; *They have not*, that is, not so much *rejected thee, as me, in desiring a king.* How does the psalmist, in his own person, or in the person of the Messiah, resent this unkindness? If it had been an enemy, or if it had been a stranger, he could have borne such usage; but to find such returns from a friend, from a confidant, from one obliged, noth-

ing less than the patience of God, or a patience divine, can bear. In short, I know nothing that ingenuous and good men are less able to bear; nothing that God himself doth more frequently and pathetically complain of, than ingratitude.

Oh loving and gracious, and bountiful God, who art never behind hand with any of thy creatures, who givest wages even to the king of Babylon, if he do thy work, (though he do it blindfolded;) who rewardest a cup of cold water duly administered to one of his fainting children; who makest the world ring of a poor widow's mite offered with a devout and grateful mind. Oh thou that art kind even to the unthankful, forbid, Oh forbid, that I should be unthankful to the kind! Bestow on me such an ingenuous soul, that I may ever maintain a grateful sense of all benefactors and benefits; if it be in the power of my hand to do it, render good for good, yea, a greater good for a less! However, grant that I may never so far put off the divine and human, and put on the devilish nature, as to return hatred for love, and conspire against the welfare of those that have contrived mine!

MEDITATION XCIX.

Of the devil, considered as a nature.

Considering the devil as a nature, I cannot but cry out, wherever I observe pride, envy, wilfulness, wrathfulness, revengefulness, uncharitableness, ingratitude, or the like, here and there is the devil.

For if men and devils agree in the same temper and disposition, it is no great matter though they differ in name. The devil is content men should call themselves by what names they please, yea, Puritans or Jesuits, so that in the mean time they will be content to be what he is.

As I doubt not but that there are many men who love God and resemble him, and are in the best sense godly, that is, God-like men, who yet cannot discourse of him metaphysically, nor understand clearly, as to the notion, what relation they stand in to him; so it is not to be doubted, but that many who are strangers to the person of the devil, are, in a Scripture sense, his children, whilst they are and do all that which in truth he is and does.

Yea, many that are afraid of the person of the devil, and almost tremble at the mention of his name, and cry, God bless us from him, do, by the impression of a devilish nature, maintain converse and familiarity with him. If one had been present then, and seen Moses playing with his rod that was in his hand, would he not have wondered and said, Is not this the serpent that this very Moses even now ran away from? And who can but stand and wonder to see the astonishment and fright of men, at a discourse of the devil and his actions, to see them crossing, and hear them blessing themselves against him, and yet at the same time taking him by the hand, yea, hugging him in their bosom; running away from the *mischievous* devil, but gladly entertaining the *unclean* devil.

Many that hate the devil and defy him, and boast against him with all the anathemas imaginable, are yet very good friends with him; for however they curse his name, and the number of his name, yet they receive his mark, not on their foreheads, but on their hearts. Yea, I believe one may say of the devil, as the proverb says of the fox, that he is no where better entertained than where he is defied and exclaimed against. *No man*, says the apostle, *speaking by the Spirit of Christ, calleth Christ accursed;* but doubtless men curse the devil by a devilish spirit. Perhaps hatred of his person is not a thing so divine as some take it to be. For my own part, I am more inclined to pity than to hate him. Men do by the devil as they say the Trojans did by the Grecians; they hated them, and yet at the same time unawares opened their gates for them, and received them into the very heart of the city.

Yea, how many people that seem zealous for religion, and forward reformers of the ill manners of the world, may be supposed to be reconciled to, yea, and actuated by the devilish nature? And so Satan may cast out Satan, and yet no dividing of Satan against himself neither.

I need not employ my thoughts so far off, as to tell how the devil of cruelty and covetousness in the Spaniards, went about to reform the devil of idolatry among the Indians. If we look nearer home, we may see that true concerning false Christians which was falsely said concerning Christ, *They cast out devils by devils;* the devils of heresy and stubbornness, by the Beelzebub of cov-

etousness and ambition; they scourge the devil of dissention by the devil of revenge; like king Jehu, casting out Baal to make room for the golden calves; and showing much zeal for the Lord, as they would have it thought, when indeed they are actuated by the satanical spirit of pride and malice, and their design is nothing but to rule, or be revenged. If a man had as good eyes as Jacob had, he might see the rams that leap on these cattle, to be speckled and grisled, the spirit that impregnates them to be no other than the spirit of apostasy, and a black incubus ascending up out of the bottomless pit.

Neither let any one think that the spiritual sins of pride, malice, and the like only, are to be called the devilish nature. For what though the person of the devil do neither eat nor drink, nor heap up silver and gold, nor acquaint himself with strange flesh? Yet drunkenness and gluttony, covetousness and lasciviousness, are really branches of the devilish nature, and belong to the spirit of apostasy; for so it is described by our Saviour, *Mat.* xvi. 23. That is satanical, be it what it will, that savoureth not the things of God. *Get thee behind me, Satan.* And why Satan? Because he, though ignorantly, opposed the redemption of mankind. True; but our Saviour puts it into a more general phrase, *Thou savourest not the things of God;* implying, that whatsoever opposes the will and ways of God, is satanical.

Men fear hell, as a place of wretchedness and punishment, rather than as an evil and wicked state; and so they hate and bann the devil, as a

name, or person at most, rather than as a sinful and apostate nature.

We read indeed of the devil possessing the bodies of men, which ordinarily occurred in the days of the Son of man. But, (though it be not so much observed, nor does so much astonish,) the possession that he has of the souls of men, is much more common, and far more dreadful. Is it not much more lamentable, that the devil should possess the souls of men, than their bodies? And does he not really possess all unregenerate minds? Is not that spirit, that apostate nature, which worketh in the children of disobedince, he? Is not diabolical impression, a real impregnation? As good men are the children of God, and *pleni Deo*, more than wicked men, by a God-like nature; so are all unregenerate men, all lovers of the world, children of the devil, under his dominion, possessed by him, impregnated by him; and indeed by Scripture warrant, they are so many Satans in the flesh, and devils incarnate.

Learned men think, that in *Zech.* iii. 1. the word *Satan* is to be read *apostate*, as if the spirit of apostasy did denominate the devil. And the wicked and apostate nature, wherever it is found predominant, denominates men devilish; otherwise Judas was no more a devil than any of us.

The devilish nature is mischievous and unrighteous, and ever opposing and perverting the right ways of the Lord. And they that are actuated by it, are, on this very account, called by the apostle, *Children of the devil*, Acts xiii. 10.

The war that the Captain of our salvation manages, is not so much against the accursed bands, the apostate spirits, (though he has plainly triumphed over them, and, I suppose, his bright legions do still under his banner oppose and rout them; as manifest hostility being kept up among them, as we read of between the troops of Joab and Abner,) as against that wicked nature, and those wicked works, which estrange the souls of men from God; as the apostle John compendiously tells us, when he describes the design and errand of the Redeemer, he says, *It was to destroy the works of the devil.* So then, all that work the works of darkness and wickedness, are his followers, and each man of them in his measure diabolical. Or whether you call them his subjects, servants, slaves, children, apprentices, (with relation to his work,) his inspired ones, his scholars; the Scripture will warrant all these.

Lord, how unpleasant and wearisome a meditation is this! What an universal defection is here! How strong is the conspiracy! What a numerous issue hath the god of this world; who, although they are thy creatures, yet are his children! No less than a *world wondering after the beast!* No less than a *whole world lying in wickedness!* No fewer than *all men seeking their own things!* Sure there is something figurative in these sad expressions. Yes; for besides the whole world that lies in wickedness, there are a *We that are of God*, 1 John v. 19. The apostasy is not so epidemical, but that there are seven thousand knees that have not bowed themselves to Baal. The whole rational nature hath not so

herded itself under the beast, but that there remains a *little flock*. The whole field of the world is not so overspread with tares, but thou hast some handfuls of wheat in it. Blessed be thou, O God, who hast not quite thrown away the world out of thy hands; who hast not utterly forsaken thy own workmanship; or rather, hast not suffered them utterly and everlastingly to forsake thee!

Be comforted, O my soul, in the great number of glorious, angelical, loyal natures, who are yet faithful, and reign with their God. And do not desperately conclude, but that there may be abundance of other intellectual beings, pure and unspotted, who still deserve to be called the children of God.

Be comforted in what thou hast seen, and dost see daily; I mean, the great Shepherd of souls rescuing out of the mouth of the lion, two legs, and a piece of an ear, *Amos* iii. 12. The Lord of the harvest gathering some gleaning grapes, two or three berries in the top of the uppermost bough, four or five in the outmost fruitful branches, *Isa.* xvii. 6. The mighty angel, with the everlasting Gospel in his hand, calling now and then one of a city, and two of a tribe, out of darkness into his marvellous light. And Oh cease not to pray the Lord of the harvest, the compassionate Father of spirits, that he will mercifully look down on the miserable apostate world, rebuke the power, retrench the dominions of the wicked one, and reap unto himself a more plentiful harvest of souls.

MEDITATION C.

Cautionary.

And now what Oedipus shall solve this riddle? What divine philosopher, what secretary of Heaven shall give us an account of this strange phenomenon?

Is there any greater wonder to man in the world, than a worldly man? What decrees of Heaven, what providence of God, what fate of Providence, what temptations from without, what inclinations from within, shall we run to, to give an account of this fearful apostasy of so great, so noble a part of the creation from his blessed centre, his pure life, his paradisaic state!

Whether we think of the corruption of the human nature in Adam, yet it is a marvellous mystery how a person of his purity and soundness come to sin, and how persons of that remoteness from him as we are, should sin in him. Though neither of which seem incredible, yet both of them seem inexplicable. If we lay the fault at the door of each pre-existent soul, it seems indeed to be just, but still it is as strange as it was before. For so every single soul is an Adam for purity, and soundness of constitution. And how shall we do to account for the apostasy of so many Adams, if we be puzzled at the fall of one?

But alas! The mysterious intricacy of this, is not so great, but that the manifest evidence of the matter of fact is as great. It is enough, Ah

Lord, it is more than enough, to know and see (which indeed we cannot hide our eyes from) that this noble vine is turned into a degenerate plant; that the native friends and favourites of God are become lovers, yea, servants, yea, worshippers of the world. And the greatness of their number is too, too evident in these meditations; which yet I am sensible have not described all. Some possibly will think these too many. I cannot help it; but the discovery is in order to their being recovered. Others, possibly, in another extreme, will think these too few; and will extend the predominant love of the world further than I do or dare.

Some are so fierce, that every body must needs be carnal, and corrupt, and of a worldly mind, who is not exactly of their mind, but of some way, persuasion or opinion different from them. These cry, *Get thee behind me, Satan.* And why Satan? Why, because thou favourest not our things, our doctrine, our discipline, our worship, our way. They cry to every one that does not please them, Thou child of the devil. And why, child of the devil, I pray? Not because they pervert the right ways of the Lord; but because they oppose their ways, and weaken their party. True indeed, heresy and schism are works of the flesh, and symptoms of a worldly mind. But they are very cunning, close things, which are very hard to be discerned, and of so lubricous a consideration, that it is very difficult to hit of them right; so difficult, that even the inspired messengers of Heaven have been mistaken for emissaries of hell, and the very pillars

of the church cast out of the church for heresy. I believe perverseness is a very devilish temper. But it is very unreasonable, without any more ado, to judge every man perverse, that does not (perhaps he cannot,) in all things think as I do, or whom my arguments cannot convince.

Some are so conceited of their own extraordinary purity, that they look down with a disdainful pity on all the rest of miserable mortality, as if they were all irrecoverably lost, and themselves, with Job's messenger, left alone to tell it. A person of the apostle John's infallibility indeed may say, *We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies in wickedness.* But for a company of Pharisees, impregnated with self-conceit, to conclude that all the world were born in sin, but themselves, and that all the vulgar sort of mortals are ignorant and accursed, this, I say, the candor of Heaven itself could not endure. Luke xvi. 15. *Ye are they that justify yourselves,* &c. The *Pseudocatharists* [or false professors of purity] in the prophet, *Isa.* lxv. 5. cry to their neighbours, *Stand off, come not near me; for I am holier than thou; Sanctificabo te,* I shall sanctify thee; that is, defile thee, as that word is often used. As if he should say, If thou touch me who am so holy, thou shalt be defiled, and guilty before God, as those common persons were accounted, who touched the altar, the blood of the sacrifice, or any holy thing which they ought not to touch.

Some are so severe, as to determine flatly against the salvation of all rich men, because Christ has declared it very difficult; and to think

not any of them are called, because the apostle says, Not many. And the grandees for wit and wealth, are meet with them, crying, *These poor people are foolish,* (Jer v. 4.) *They know not the way of the Lord, nor the judgment of their God; they know not the law, and are cursed.*

Others pass hard censures on all heathen men, yea, and on Christian unbaptized infants too; whether true or false I know not, but I could wish they were false, and the learning of some more charitable divines has endeavoured to prove them not true.

There are others besides all these, who (though perhaps out of no bad principle,) are ready to judge many things to be symptoms of a predominant love of the world, which are not. It is true, the love of the world is so dangerous and pernicious, that it ought to be the constant care of every awakened soul to flee from it; and one would almost pardon the scrupulosity and fear of those that run away from it, though they should be supposed to run too far. And the love of God is so pure and divine a thing, so great a perfection, that the exercise of it admits of no excess; if the whole soul were turned into a pure flame of love, it would not be a sacrifice too costly or precious, to be offered up to that ever blessed Being, the supreme Good; neither would there be any room for the envy of hell itself, to put in a *quorsum perditio hæc,* [to what purpose is this waste?]

But though it admits of no excess, yet I conceive it admits of mistakes; and though men cannot outdo in it, yet they may do amiss about it. As I conceive they do, (how pardonable soever

their mistake is,) who condemn them for lovers of the world, who do any works of necessity, charity, or common civility on the Lord's day; who think oftener of the world, than they do of God; or who in their practice sometimes prefer a worldly business that is important, before a sermon or a prayer.

Devotion itself, how excellent a thing it is, may be irregular; and there needs judgment, as well as affections, to denominate a man a right Christian; without which, even the highest perfections of love and zeal do degenerate into something worse than the notation of the words imports.

And although I do reckon that it is highly laudable and reasonable to live in continual weariness of this world and life, and holy longings after the presence of God, endeavouring to attain to the resurrection of the dead, yet I do not believe but there are many languishings, and fainting fits that befal the most devout lovers of the Father here in the body. Neither dare I condemn every man for a predominant lover of the world, who in some passion, some temptation or other, has almost lost his sight and taste of God, and casts a fond eye on this life and world, as wretched as it is. It is best to wish with Paul, to be dissolved. It is next best to groan with Paul, *O wretched man that I am*, &c. It is pious to keep up a predominant estimation of heaven, and to make the main business of our lives, a doing of God's will, and a preparation for his kingdom. But yet I dare not conclude it to be a symptom of predominant worldly love, when I hear David crying in some case, *O spare me a*

little, &c. For when we urge the predominant love of God as absolutely necessary, we do not mean by predominant, that it should be in the strictest sense perfect. The love of the meanest saint is predominant, and the love of the most devout is imperfect.

There are many other mistakes about the predominant love of the world, which are occasionally met with and corrected in the foregoing meditations.

Lord, suffer not my inflamed heart to rest in the lowest evidences of a predominant love to thee; no, nor to be at rest, till it arrive at the highest demonstrations, expressions, and exercise thereof! Though the consideration of sincerity and predominancy may sustain and comfort me, yet let nothing short of perfection content and satisfy me! Oh Almighty Love, wrap up my loving soul in thyself! And Oh cast forth thy cords of love, and draw the estranged souls of men unto thyself! Pity the infinite numbers of prodigal apostates, that have forsaken the bread of their Father's house, and, like swine, feed on empty husks; those many noble souls, all of them like so many kings by their creation, that, as it were, with their thumbs cut off, lie gathering crumbs for their sustenance! Restore their maimed faculties, and lift up their heads out of prison, change their prison garments, and let them eat bread before thee continually! And Oh grant that all lovers of the Father may be judicious and regular in their own devotions, and charitable towards the devotions and affections of their brethren! Amen, Amen.

PART II.

MEDITATION I.

Of the false despisers of riches.

It is too, too evident that the many sorts of persons, before named, are in the judgment of God, lovers of the world, even all that prefer the profits, pleasures, honours, persons, business, fashions of the world before God; that is, before righteousness, truth, peace, public good, holy order, charity, purity, and the sacred will of God. But because there are really many of these that will not yet acknowledge themselve to be such; let us examine a little more closely, to find out, if possible, who they are that lie under this black character, and to whom it doth agree. And now I will a little examine man considered in his political capacity, for in that he is more discernible than in his moral.

And here, methinks, I hear a generation of monastical people, (whether Papists or Protestants, it matters not,) blessing themselves, and saying, it is apparent that they, of all people in the world, are no lovers of it. They are so far

from coveting the riches of the world, that they give away all they have, and reject the kindness of those that would give them more. They embrace poverty as a great perfection, and nakedness as an ornament. It was a high character of them, that took joyfully the spoiling of their goods. But what perfectionists are these, that spoil themselves?

The disciples of Jesus were mortified men, who reckoned two coats superfluous, but these evangelists are even weary of the incumbrance of one. Nay, they seem to out-vie the Son of man himself, of whom it is said, *That he had not whereon to lay his head.* As if he stood in need of some house, or artificial conveniences; whereas the cold earth every where affords these hardy soldiers of his a sufficient bed, and the spangled heavens a canopy.

To all which great pretensions, I only suggest these two or three inquiries,

1. Is it highly reasonable, that these pretenders to a contempt of worldly riches, do inquire into themselves, Whether in deed, and in truth, they do what they seem to do? Whether there be no fallacy, hypocrisy, or deception in this matter? For we have read of those that pretended to part with all to the church; who yet kept back a part for their own dear selves, and by laying their money at the apostles' feet, seemed to trample it under their own; who yet, for all their seeming faith and contempt of the world, did not so strip themselves of all, but that they kept a rag for a sore finger. Ananias and Sapphira are examples.

2. It may be proper to inquire, Whether some of the heathens themselves, whom you so undervalue as the refuse of men, have not done as much as all this comes to? This I take for granted, according to the logic of divinity itself, that it is but a sorry perfection in a Christian, that does not excel all that can be found in a heathen, *Mat.* vi. 32. If they seek after these and these things, it becoms Christians to seek after higher; if they do such and such things, it behoves Christians to do greater.

Now, I suppose, it is an easy thing to find many men as perfectly and voluntarily poor among the heathen philosophers, as among Christians; among the Cynics, as well as the hermits; as much contempt of the world, to any man's thinking, in a tub, as in a cloister.

But it will be said, these men did not neglect the world out of a pure design; therefore,

3. It will not be amiss, that these Christian contemners of the world do examine their principles and ends; for if this voluntary casting away of the world be only a trick to draw and convert the eyes of the world to themselves, and to procure an estimation of mortified men; or a piece of bribery to merit, or purchase the rewards of Heaven; or a design to get riches, by a pretended contempt of them; or a cloak for idleness, that they may eat and drink of the best without doing any thing for it; choosing rather to eat their bread in the sweat of other men's brows, than of their own: if any such things as these, I say, happen, all this contempt of the world is spoiled, and becomes contemptible in the eyes of God;

nay, indeed, it proves to be a device for the more effectual maintaining of the worldly life. And who knows but that it may so happen, or rather, who knows not that it does? Contempt of the world must be impartial and regular, or else it will not pass for devotion. And if a man predominantly love the world in any branch of it, he is justly denominated a lover of the world, however he may seem to despise it in many other branches of it. It is a sorry shift to endeavour to be thought to despise the riches of the world, and in the mean time to be enslaved to worldly ease and idleness. To some men it is the greatest sensual pleasure in the world to do nothing.

Has not the same God, who commanded us not to covet, nor love the world, also commanded to work, and get our livings? Oh but they have spiritual work to do. What merchant so industrious as they, that compass sea and land to make proselytes? And did not Paul abound in this work of the Lord, as much as any that pretend to an imitation of him? Yet he made his own hands administer to his necessities, rather than be chargeable to the churches; though I suppose the churches then, were as free and as kind-hearted as they are now.

In short, as a man may give away all his goods to feed the poor, and yet have no charity; so he may cast away the world, and yet not rightly contemn it; and to a wise observer show himself to be more a fool, or a fanatic, than a saint.

Good God, since the world is so manifold, grant that I may be mortified to one branch of it as well as another; that I may not maintain

the worldly life in one sense, whilst I seem to destroy it in another; that I may not cleave to the golden calves, nor haunt the high places, whilst I seem to renounce Ashtaroth; lest in breaking one commandment, I be found guilty of all.

MEDITATION II.

Of the false despisers of pleasures, and of the votaries of virginity.

If any one love the pleasures of the *world the love of the Father is not in him.* Fleshly pleasures are the bane of the soul, they are deadly enemies to it; they do, in an especial manner, *war against it*, says the apostle, yea, and they kill it too! For he or she that lives in them, is dead whilst they live. He that travels or negotiates in a strange country, had need to take heed of enemies, especially the natives of the place. And so had this pilgrim soul that sojourns here in the flesh, need to beware of the pleasures of the flesh, which are, as it were, the *indigenæ* or natives; for they do most endanger and ensnare. The poet could tell us that the wise wanderer stopped his ears against the inchanting syrens. And the holy text tells us how ill the pilgrim sons of Jacob fared, for not abstaining from the wine and women of Moab. These did them more hurt, than all the opposition they had met in their march. What if we reckon with ourselves, that we are so many Ulysses, wandering homeward in many uncertainties; like

so many Israelites, trying our fortune to find the Canaan, out of which sometime we came; so many younger brethren that have taken our journey into a far country where now we are. Should we not, with ardent contention of soul, pant and breathe after our home, our own country, our Father's house, and consequently beware of the enchanting syrens, and Circes, the Cozbis, the harlots; I mean all the fleshly pleasures that obstruct our return, and war against our souls.

Agreed, cry the votaries of virginity and penance, we are the only despisers of the world, we have stopped our ears and all our senses against the inchantments of it. In comparison of us, Samson was as weak as the new cords that himself broke off his arms; and Solomon himself void of understanding. We have made ourselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. We will pluck out our right eye if it look upon a maid, and cut off our right hand if it chance to suffer a kiss of a female. We keep under our bodies, and chasten our rebellious flesh, till we make it crouch as obsequiously as any spaniel. We persecute our own flesh as severely as we would do an heretic. And though the apostle will not allow us to hate it, yet we cannot but be ashamed of it. We are true followers of that holy doctor of the Gentiles, whose many journeyings we match, if not overdo, in our long and frequent pilgrimages, and his self-castigations by our penances. These are high pretensions indeed. But it is worth the while for the pretenders to inquire, whether they be just, and whether they be conclusive of a contempt of the world?

For certainly all single life does not deserve the honourable name of virginity. One may allude to the prophet's riddle, and apply it here with a little pardonable absonancy; *The children of the barren are more than of her that bore.* The Scripture describes marriage by the coalition of two into one; *They two shall be one flesh.* If this metonymical marriage must pass for current, I doubt the votaries of virginity will be diminished by this test, as much as the soldiers of Gideon's army, who, at the first trial, shrunk from thirty-two thousand to ten thousand. But further, Christ, the best discerner of purity, tells us, That there may be many no-virgins, whose bodies are yet untouched; as if it were not so much the conjunction of two bodies, as of two minds, that made a marriage, or worse. It is not enough not to have known a man. Virgin purity is a tender thing, and may be spoiled even by some kind of seeing a man. He that looks on a woman, to lust after her, defiles himself; and she that looks on a man, violates her purity. And now I wish our virgins, both males and females, be not shrunk again, as much as the forenamed captain's soldiers, at the second trial, who fell from ten thousand to three hundred. Yea, and it is further to be wished, that of this little number that is left, of those that have not known nor seen any of the other sex, the rest have not, at some time or other, heard of them, read of them, or thought of them, otherwise than becomes them, and so be not like the three hundred soldiers even now named, that carried lamps within their vessels, I mean, that burn, though they marry not.

And now, methinks, I could find in my heart to grant, that if the claim to this pure, perfect, unspotted, unsullied virginity be just, it is conclusive; because I am very confident it is not just.

But yet it will not be amiss to inquire, whether this unspotted chastity be accompanied with the profound self-exinanition, and entire self-resignation, and especially with that divine charity that it ought? The true virgin is the soul that chastely adheres to God, the blessed Being whose name is Love. And she is an adulterous soul that cherishes wicked hatred, as well as she that allows wanton love. What if I do not burn in unlawful love, if I burn in hatred and be inflamed with revenge, I have defiled my soul, and lost my purity in the sight of God. The high priests would not defile themselves by the judgment hall, but with envy and murder thy would. Or what if this pure virgin flee from all mortal embraces, yea, and loathe the sight and thoughts of any man, if she settle into a self-admiration, fondly doting on her own beauty or virginity, or wantonly dallying with her own fortitude or perfections, she has played the harlot from God, who alone ought to be supreme in the soul, and is become unchaste in her loves.

It may be very pertinent to examine, whether a great part of the virginity that is found in the world, be not merely constitutional. No thanks to them not to burn, who are not combustible. Another great part political, when people live single, merely that they may live. It was accounted bad devotion in Saul, when he forced himself, and offered a sacrifice. And how shall

she be accounted an acceptable virgin, who, though she flies from men, forces herself.

Pure chastity is indeed a delicate and divine thing, if it be any where to be found; but this does not at all disparage conjugal love justly placed, and purely exercised and observed. Nay, I do verily think that there is as much or more chastity to be found in a conjugal state, as in a single. To the conjugal bed it is that the apostle gives the epithet of *undefiled.* I wish the virgins can any of them say as much of their's; more, I am sure, they cannot. I will allow a pure virgin state to be excellent, perhaps more excellent than a conjugal; but it is enough for the conjugal to be accounted honourable, and that it is in plain terms by the holy Author of it, God himself. But whatever excellencies in some sense or other may be found in the virgin state, yet I hope its virgin modesty is such as will forbid it to vie with the conjugal for usefulness, which I am sure is one famous species of excellency. And indeed for goodness, or excellency in general, I cannot see how that can be bad now, which even in the state of innocency itself was declared to be good, Gen. ii. *It is good for man to have a wife.*

MEDITATION III.

Of the votaries of penance.

As for the votaries of penance, though it may well be doubted whether they feel a smart an-

swerable to the shrugs and sour faces that they make; and though it may be charitably supposed that they sustain themselves very well with rich cordials and good fare, whereby many pilgrimages, of a hundred or two hundred miles long, become less troublesome to them than many a poor man's journey or labour of a day, and so their pretensions are not just; yet suppose all to be true that is pretended, how will it certainly conclude a contempt of the world.

For will not Diogenes among the heathens pretend to as much neglect of the pleasures of the world, and the ease of the flesh, by lying in his tub, as any body can do by travelling abroad bare-foot and bare-legged? Will not the disciples of the pharisees put in for the severity of frequent fasts, and match the disciples of John, outdo the disciples of Jesus? And will not the priests of Baal put in for a share of the honour due to lashing and slashing devotion, as well as any Gospel priests? There will never be any firm and comfortable inference, so long as it may be inquired, What do you more than others, and those none of the best neither? So then, the inquiry will be, At whose command, out of what principle, for what end, are all these severities executed? If any of these fail, the contempt of the world is but a pretence. And who knows not but that the worship of the Gentiles, and of the Baalitish Jews too, performed with so much smart, and sacred horror, is accounted of God and all good men, slavishly superstitious, and a hateful will-worship. If the principle out of which all these severities are performed be so

pure as it ought, it will produce an uniform self-denial, and holy obedience, and a contempt of the world and all the branches of it, as well as in the pleasures; so that, if there be not a humility, charity, faith, hope, zeal, answerable to these bodily exercises, they will profit nothing. If a man give his body to be burned, and in the mean time have a mind to burn his brother, he is no martyr, no, nor saint neither.

And may not the worldly life be maintained and cherished in the acts of self-love, self-seeking, self-confidence, pride, and self-feeling, amidst all this abstemiousness, and these severities exercised on the body?

Yea, what if all these things should be nothing but to bribe the justice of God, to tie the hands of his holy vengeance, to establish a righteousness of one's own, to purchase by merit a sorry, carnal kind of heaven, merely external and future. If so, then they are symptoms of a slavish and superstitious, but are utterly inconsistent with a holy and religious mind. And who knows not but that all this may be so, yea, and every discerning Christian does vehemently suspect that it often is.

From hence, O my soul, take an occasion to consider, that thou, as to thy natural capacity, art able to act without the help of the flesh, and without any dependence thereon, and consequently capable of committing sins of the spirit as well as sins of the flesh; however in a lax sense, whatever is contrary to God may in Scripture be called flesh, and so all sins may be called works of the flesh. When thou hast laid aside this

flesh, thou canst not reasonably think of, nor patiently endure to think of a long sleep, till the time that thou shalt re-assume it; and if after thy release from flesh, thou shalt still be able to act, then surely it may be fairly concluded, that even some of thy acts, even whilst thou art in the body, are purely spiritual, and do little or nothing depend on the body.

Though thou canst not be guilty of adultery or drunkenness, without the help of the body, yet it is no fault of the body, or a very remote one, that thou art proud, self-willed, unbelieving, and uncharitable. All filthy and unrenewed souls will not be the less, but rather much more such, by leaving the flesh. Distinguish therefore carefully between the sins of the flesh and of the spirit; and reckon that thy firm and chaste adherence to the ever blessed God thy centre, and entire resignation of thyself to him, is thy unspotted chastity, and much to be preferred before temperance and continency. What if thou have kept thy hands from "picking and stealing," if in the mean time by pride thou rob God of his honour, or, by unbelief, Christ of his glory, how art thou honest? What if thou hast not smitten with the fist of wickedness or violence, if by self-will thou hast rebelliously contended against the authority of Heaven, and secretly opposed the will of God, how art thou loyal? What if thou have not prostituted any of thy fleshly members to adulterous aspects or embraces, yet if thou have in a way of self-love fondly admired and wantonly dallied with thy own perfections, as something distinct from God, how art thou

chaste? What if thou hast so severely chastised the body, that thou mayest seem to have battered the out-works of sin, yet if it still lodge in the castle of thy heart, if thy body be empty with fasting, and the heart full of pride, and conceits of thy own righteousness and merits; if the flesh by severe discipline, and many macerations, be made obsequious to thee, and thou in the mean time remainest unsubdued to the authority and will of God, what real profit hast thou by this bodily exercise, or how canst thou think, without blasphemy, to commune with God? If thou think by penance to commute for true conversion and repentance, as men by money commute for penance, thou art in the worst sense Simoniacal, and it will be said to thee, Thy penance perish with thee.

Lord, make me to feel the mighty power of holy religion on my soul, subjecting it to thy authority, reconciling it to thy will, uniting it to thy perfection, and conforming it to thy purity; purging me from all secret selfishness, cleansing me from all hypocrisy, unbelief, pride, and sacrilegious conceits of my own worthiness! And then I will not fear, whether in a virgin or conjugal state; whether by the austerity of John, or the freedom of Jesus, to be accepted of thee, and either wholly to escape, or victoriously to prevail against the sins of the flesh!

MEDITATION IV.

Of the Quakers, or Friends.

From these false despisers of pleasures, I will now proceed to consider a generation of men that pretend to be mighty lovers of God, inasmuch as they reject and undervalue the honours of the world. For as the predominant love of honour will certainly denominate a man a lover of the world, so it seems that the just contempt of it should argue a lover of God. And here, though there be many pretenders, yet the people called Quakers seem to be the most famous species. I beg their pardon that I call them Quakers (which name they seem not to relish well,) for I profess I do it not out of a way of reproach, but merely for distinction sake. I confess I do not know what the *proprium quarto modo*, [the peculiar character] of a quaker is; for he has many things common with other separatists, and with other men that are not separatists, so that I shall not meddle with him under any consideration, but this, of undervaluing the world, expressed either in words, actions, or fashions, because he pretends more to this, than any sort of men that I can think of; and yet herein I will not judge him neither, but in kindness put him upon judging of himself. And I will digest my meditations into this order, first briefly lay down as far as I know the Quaker's judgment and most general practice about this matter. Secondly, show what authority or argument he brings for it. Thirdly, exam-

ine the strength of those arguments, and consider what answers may be given to them. And lastly, suggest some things whereby he may try his sincerity and spirituality in this matter.

I will willingly grant by way of premise, that worldly honour, respect and applause are very dear and grateful to the animal life and fleshly mind, so dear, that he does prefer it before the approbation of God and the witness of a good conscience. I do grant that to love the praise of men more than the praise of God, is a symptom of a pharisaical and hypocritical person.

That all honour in a Scripture sense is due to God, and that all the glory of men is nothing but a reflection of divine glory.

That the proper honour consists in due estimation, and reverence of mind, and that the external expressions of it by words or gestures are less properly called honour.

That it is an argument of a weak, corrupt and carnal mind, to honour those whom he knows to be unworthy of honours, to bless those whom God abhors.

That it is a great perfection to be mortified to the sense and expectation of worldly honour, approbation, applause, and respect of men, and an excellent, Christ-like attainment and fortitude, to be able rightly to bear contempt, and in no degree to complain of unjust neglect.

And now I shall proceed to the first head which I propound to myself in this meditation, *viz.* What is the Quaker's judgment and most general practice about this matter. I think indeed they are not all agreed, (whether it be be-

cause some are less perfect than others, or because some are more deluded than others, I know not,) but yet their most received opinion is that they ought not to give honour to men. And yet this they mostly limit to external honour, for I never met with any of them that seemed unwilling to be loved, to be esteemed well of, and to be valued according to his worth or wealth either.

And so with them the bowing of the body in a way of reverence looks like idolatry, the putting off the hat is superstitious, the giving titles of honour is carnal, and so much as to thank the fellow creature is at best vain; and so are all worldly fashions in apparel, compliments in words, civil distinction, and the like.

MEDITATION V.

Of the Quakers' arguments.

For this severe kind of denying of honours and fashions of the world, they allege many plain precepts, and noble examples. Neither will I dissemble, there seems to be a great deal to be said for it.

They will tell you, that, as to this matter, the great Moses was a Quaker as much as they, when he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; preferring the profession of a despised religion with the professed Israelites, before the worldly honour of the Egyptian court; when he undervalued his own reputation for a

prophet, and would not engross that honour to himself, but was desirous that all the Lord's people should share in it; when he married an Ethiopian woman at a time when he might have had rich and noble matches, and took so meekly the reproachful reflections that his brother and sister had made upon him, for his so great undervaluing of himself.

Of the same spirit was the prophet Elijah, who treated the king of Israel as like a Quaker as ever you heard, 2 Kings iii. 12, 14. *What have I to do with thee? Get thee to the prophets of thy father, and of thy mother.* And he swears, (and therein he seems to be less perfect than a Quaker,) *As the Lord liveth, were it not that I regard the presence of the king of Judah, I would not look at thee.*

Somewhat like this freedom of spirit, and plainness of speech, void of compliments, and courtly respect of persons, may be found in the history of all the prophets, almost from Samuel, down to Malachi.

And lest this should be thought to be only an unpolished Old Testament spirit, they come as near to the Gospel times as may be, and quote the Baptist, a greater than whom the daughters of men had not borne, whose plain and unfashionable dress, and diet, severe conversation, and uncomplimental usage of all sorts of men, even Herod the king, and the viperous generation of the formal Pharisees, they fancy does much resemble and justify the evangelical Quaker. They think they resemble him in his looks and doctrine, and life, and say, they would not hesitate

to be conformable to him in his death too. But if John seem also to have a little too much of the sourness of the law in him, and so his example should be rejected, they hope the author of the Gospel, and his most intimate friends and constant followers, will justify their spirit and behaviour.

The sharp answer that Jesus sent to Herod, (the fox,) the plain reprehensions that he gave to the hypocritical, blind, and superstitious Pharisees, notwithstanding their great authority in the church; his poor and harmless way of living; his disowning of relations, in comparison of the doers of the will of God; his free and friendly converse with the poorest, and the worst too, in order to their good; shows how little of stateliness, or compliment, or worldly respects was in him. And he taught men so too. He ever and anon commands a simple and irrespective discourse and behaviour. *Let your speech be yea and nay. Call no man father or master on earth. Be not called of men rabbi. Affect not the uppermost places in synagogues, or at feasts, love not greetings in the markets; when thou makest a feast call not the rich,* who can requite thy kindness, but the poor that cannot, to thy table. He reproved the fashionable robes of the Pharisees, with which they used to conciliate respect, he preferred honest John in his camel's hair, before the courtiers of the world in their camelet coats and soft raiment; poor fishermen before the Nimrods of the earth; beggarly Lazarus before the voluptuous rich man, whom he does not deign to name, although according to the flesh, he was the son of

Abraham. He magnified the two mites given by the poor widow, above the costly oblations of the rich; and commemorates a box of ointment devoutly bestowed by a poor woman, more than all the sumptuous feasts he was ever bidden to by the wealthy; nay he seems to make the giving and receiving of honour one from another to be inconsistent with the Gospel faith, when he says, *How can ye believe that receive honour one of another?* And elsewhere gives this reason why many did not profess, because they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.

And were not his apostles and disciples followers of his simplicity and plainness? Jacob was a plain man dwelling in tents, and so was Paul too, and a maker of tents to dwell in, and he tells us of himself and the rest, that they used great plainness of speech. (2 *Cor.* iii. 12.) Peter and James were angry at the honourable thoughts that they perceived the Jews had of them, *Why look ye on us*, &c. And the same Peter refused the compliments of the captain, Cornelius. Paul and Barnabas were grieved at the respects offered them by the heathen people, insomuch that they rent their cloaths and cried out. These apostles are still exhorting to uncomplimental speech, speech not according to men's wisdom or the wisdom of the world, plain and unfashionable apparel, and commending a dress of grace and good works, before an adorning with silver and gold, and costly apparel. They require men not to be respecters of persons, and not to be conformed to this world. *In all things to give thanks to God the Father by Christ*, Col. iii 17.

In a word, who knows not what a Quaker Mordecai was under the law, who would rather lose his head, than put off his hat to profane Haman.

And the apostle James under the Gospel, who requires us not to be many masters, whereas at the present time every body will be a master; not to have the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ with respect of persons; and does so plainly tax the worldly partiality of his days, for giving honour and respect to the gaudy gentleman with gold rings, and goodly apparel, rather than to the poor saint in mean apparel, as if he had by the spirit of prophesy seen the partiality of our conversation; or to allude to the story of the prophet, as if his heart had gone along with us, when the man alighted from his chariot to salute us.

And now what can be said more, except we say that the very angels refuse honour from their fellow-creatures, and refer it all to God. And God himself, to whom it justly belongs to receive honour from all, yet is pure and impartial in his regards to every one, having often declared himself to be no respecter of persons.

MEDITATION VI.

The strength of the Quakers' arguments considered.

I suppose we are all agreed thus far, that when the Scripture forbids, or seems to forbid giving or receiving honour, it cannot be understood of

the real, proper, inward honour, which is no other than reverence, or due estimation, and is little else than the love that we bear to a superior. The text has commanded us expressly, *To honour our parents, to honour the king, to honour all men.*

This must be understood, at the least, of this inward honour and reverence, which indeed is primarily due to God, the Father of lights; but secondarily, and for his sake, to men also, to whom he has communicated most of himself. And according to this greater or lesser communication of himself, I suppose our honour or estimation of men ought to be greater or less. And so consequently we are all agreed, that there is no honour due, where there is no real worth or excellency; and to esteem persons unduly, is an imperfection of the judgment, and a departure from truth, which must needs be evil.

But the excellency and worthiness that God gives to men is of several sorts, natural, political, moral, supernatural, and all these the objects of honour. So that there is an honour due to parents, though they be ever so unkind; to kings and magistrates, though they be bad men; to a moralist, though he never heard of Christ; and especially to saints, though they be ever so poor, and otherwise unaccomplished, by reason of the supernatural worth that God has communicated to them. And because the image of God in knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness, is the most excellent communication of God to man, therefore the saints are, in the psalmist's phrase, *the excellent of the earth*, and the greatest honor

is due to them on that account; let Christ Jesus himself be judge, who esteemed the supernatural excellency of them that did the will of God, more than the natural excellency of all relations according to the flesh; and let his apostle Paul be judge, who honoured Christ himself more on a spiritual account than on any fleshly consideration whatever, *Though we have known Christ after the flesh*, &c. The controversy, then, will be about the external and less proper honour, or rather the outward expression of honour by words or gestures. That there may and ought to be such expressions of honour, according to the different customs of different countries, is plain, both by precept and example. To rise up before the hoary is expressly commanded, and it is made the same with the honouring of old men, *Lev.* xix. 32. The relieving of parents is accounted an honouring of them by our Saviour, *Matt.* vii. 10. And the paying of tribute is an external expression of honour that is due to kings, and it is expressly required, *For this cause pay ye tribute also*, &c. It is needless, and it would be almost endless to record all the examples of the wise and holy men in Scripture, that justify the giving and receiving expressions of honour, in words and gestures.

Neither can we reasonably imagine that all nations and ages of the world are bound to the very same expressions of honour which the Jews used, or those ages of the world that the Scripture writes the history of. If the Jews fall flat before a prince or a prophet, and we only kneel before them, we are not more complimental than

they, but less. There is less suspicion or appearance of worship, in giving the right hand of fellowship, and putting off the hat, which we use, than there is in their bowings and prostrations of old, which were so common among them.

And as for verbal expressions of honour, we are no more complimental than the best of men have ever been, in commending things well done, and praising them that do them, in praying for the long life and prosperity of kings and magistrates, in saluting our neighbours, and wishing them a good day, or good speed, inquiring after their welfare, rejoicing in it, or thanking them for their good will, or any good turn. That very apostle who so often *gave thanks to God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ*, does not scruple to give thanks to his fellow creatures, *Rom.* xvi. 4.

This, I think, is enough to justify the sober use of these civilities in words and gestures, which they call compliments. But I do not think any thing of this does justify the hypocrisy, falsity, flattery, and either undue or excessive expressions of respect, which all sober men do complain of, as well as the Friends. And would to God we were all so wise and righteous, as to honour and respect all men agreeably to their real worth; and so simple and sincere, as to use only such outward expressions, as for their nature and degree, are agreeable to that honour!

MEDITATION VII.

The Quakers' arguments answered.

But still it remains that I do invalidate or moderate the arguments taken from Scripture examples and doctrines, against giving and receiving honour.

Moses, indeed, was a person of admirable humility, fortitude, patience, meekness, and contempt of the world, but far from our modern Quakers; for however he refused a certain kind of honour that was offered him at one time, as being in the matter inconsistent with the religious course he had entered on, yet at other times we read that he was very much honoured by the people, and it was the pleasure of God that he should be honoured by them. God himself did magnify him in the sight of all Israel. I believe he esteemed it as great an honour to be accounted a son of Abraham, as the son of Pharaoh's daughter; and to lead and feed so great a people so miraculously in the wilderness, as to live in the pomp and ease of the Egyptian court. As for the instances that are brought out of the behaviour of Mordecai, who would not vouchsafe his cap and knee to the proud Agagite; of Elisha, who would not vouchsafe a look to the wicked king of Israel; by that time something be allowed to the constitution of these men, something to their extraordinary spirit, and something to the extraordinariness of their circumstances, especially the former, the argument from

hence will be very much moderated. And when it shall be observed, that these very men at other times both gave honour to men, and themselves received great honour from men, as is very evident in their story, it will appear that they were no Quakers in that point. In the mean time I confess I could heartily wish that this civil respect might not be so indifferently bestowed, and prostituted, by being made common to all men alike, both good and bad. For if all men professing the Gospel, were of that purity and fortitude which becomes them, and so free from folly and flattery, slavishness and partiality, as the true spirit of the Gospel requires, there would be a great distinction between the precious and the vile, in honour, and all expressions of it, although there would be a just respect kept up to all men with relation had to their authority; which is something divine. For honour ought to be agreeable to the worth, and it is reasonable to think, that the outward expressions of honour which we show, ought to be proportionable to the honour we bear; otherwise we shall be chargeable with something of hypocrisy, flattery, or partiality, which the simplicity of the Gospel knows not.

The Baptist indeed was an austere man, (a Nazarite) but his particular fashion of apparel, and his way of diet, and converse, were not intended to be an example to the rest of the world; for neither did his Lord and Master conform to his guise, (*John came neither eating nor drinking,*) nor yet do the Quakers feel bound to gird themselves as he did, nor with him, to feed on locusts and wild honey.

If they imitate him in the doctrine of repentance, it is no other than what every evangelical minister will consent to be a Quaker in, as well as they; only perhaps he will not be content to preach it so nakedly, as they do sometimes, and as I myself have seen them.*

As for that familiar phrase and those plain reprehensions which both the Baptist and Christ Jesus used toward Herod and the Pharisees, let all divines that have the same understanding in points of divinity, and the same spirit of discerning hearts, be as plain and as positive as they. And Oh that the smooth flatteries, and colloguing addresses of many ministers, did not so much tempt the Friends to a contrary extreme, of handling men rudely, and without any respect to their civil quality, as they do at this day!

As for the familiar converse that Christ held with the worst of men for their edification, his loving and undisdainful behaviour to the poor, his valuing of all persons according to their real worth, and preferring the spiritual cognation before the carnal, I would to God we were all thus far Quakers, I mean faithful followers of his humility, patience, zeal, charity, and compassion! which I doubt not but many men are as much, or more, than those that call themselves Friends.

But what shall I say to the plain commands of not being called rabbi, of not calling any man father or master on earth, of sitting down in the lowest places at feasts, and the like? Why, I have this to say, that they are not plain com-

* This passage alludes to several extravagancies in the early history of this denomination.

mands, nor must they be understood in the plainest and most literal sense. It is not fair for the Quakers to make Christ speak for them, so as to make him speak against himself.

These passages can no way be understood to establish the doctrine of not giving and receiving honour; for we know Christ himself was called Rabbi, and commends, elsewhere, the good manners of his disciples, in calling him Master. And when he himself speaks of men's natural parents, he calls them their father and their mother, (*Suffer him not to do ought for his father or mother.*) And Paul owns himself the father of the Corinthians. But they do teach the doctrine of humility in general, and not to depend on the authority of any man as absolute and supreme.

As for our Saviour's doctrine, John v. 44. *That they cannot believe, who receive honour one from another;* it cannot be understood in the Quaker's sense, because we are so expressly required to honour one another; which would be utterly in vain, if none were allowed to receive the honour that is given them.

Some therefore interpret it by way of comparison, *q. d.* that is given of God, and make it the same in sense with John xii. 43. *They loved the praise of men, more than the praise of God.* I confess, for my part, I cannot embrace this interpretation as genuine; for I do not see any comparison in the text, nor discern that they loved the praise of God at all. Neither will the word μᾶλλον infer it; for the word is often used by way of correction or opposition, where there is no comparison at all; as in John iii. 19. *Now men*

love darkness more than light, because their deeds are evil. Where the meaning is, that men loved darkness, and not light. For so it follows in ver. 20. *Every one that does evil, hates the light.* And so in divers other places. But it is plainly to be understood of being carried away with the affectation of vain glory; *Ye cannot believe, that receive honour one from another;* i. e. that seek and strive, and covet to receive. For in Scripture that is said to be done, which is only endeavoured or sought to be done. Thus, Ezek. xxiv. 13. *I have purged thee, and thou wast not purged.* Amos ix. 3. *Though they be hid from my sight in the bottom of the sea.* Rom. ii. 4. *The goodness of God leadeth;* that is, seeketh to lead thee to repantance. In this very chapter, ver. 34 and 41. Christ says, *He received not honour from men.* And again, *I receive not testimony from men.* Though we know well enough he received the testimony of John. The meaning is therefore, That he sought not, strove not, coveted not to receive the honour and testimony of man. So here, *Ye cannot believe, that receive honour one from another;* that is, that are carried away with popular applause; and seek and study the honour that is from men, as appears by the opposition in the latter clause of the verse, *Ye seek not the honour that is from God only.*

MEDITATION VIII.

Some suggestions to the Quakers.

And now I should pass on to suggest something to the Quakers, whereby they may examine themselves and their sincerity in this matter, when they fancy themselves to be the only despisers of the honours of the world, and so comfortably infer for themselves, that they are the lovers of God. But when they pretend so much to an irrespective and impartial behaviour, they quote the Apostle James for their patron, James ii. 2, 3, 4. Who seems to speak so plainly for them, and quite to cut the throat of all carnal mannerliness and compliment, that I should not be true to them, nor my own reason neither, if I did not take that text into consideration.

First, then, I will confess that the texts do condemn partiality, and respect of persons, and the preference of one before another, upon a mere worldy account, in our judgment or affections. And do declare, that the greatest honour is to be given to men upon an evangelical account; and that it is this day a shameful sin among Christians, that they estimate men by their estates, parentage, apparel, retinue, rather than according to the example of God, who values men according to their resemblance to himself, and honours them that honour him.

That the persons of men are not to be accepted, but all judgment to be administered exactly according to the merits of the cause.

But what shall we say to the text? Does it absolutely forbid the giving of any honour, or showing any respect to men upon a mere worldly account?

Shall I sit down with the English annotators, and confess, that "it is a fault, and that this fault is found among us too commonly at this day."

Shall I content myself to say in general with the Dutch annotators, that "partiality, or respect of persons, is here forbidden."

Is there no way to rescue the text out of the hands of the Quakers, and keep it from patronizing an irrespective and unmannerly behaviour?

Dr. Hammond has found out one way, by interpreting the assemblies of the courts of judicature among the Jews, among whom it was a law, that if a rich man and a poor had any matter to be judged by the court, they should both have one and the same usage, and the like place and posture should be allowed them both. So that accordng to that learned commentator, the sense is no more than this, that judgment should be indifferently administered to all men, according to the merit of the cause, without suffering ourselves to be swayed with the person; that is, with any thing extrinsical to the cause, as Mollerus expounds it on *Psal.* lxxxii. 2. Such as power, parentage, riches, affinity, apparel, acquaintance, or the like, according to that saying of Cato in Plutarch, Τὸν κριτὴν δεῖ μηδὲ ὑπὲρ δικαίων λιπαρεῖσθαι, μηδὲ ὑπερ τῶν ἀδίκων ἐκλιπαρεῖσθαι. [A judge should not be too respectful towards the innocent, or too disrespectful towards the guilty.]

Or else the text may be interpreted of any other assemblies, but then the rich and fine man

must be understood with his adjunct of wickedness, and the poor man with his adjunct of faith and piety; and so the sense is, that a wicked rich man ought not to be respected or preferred before a godly poor man. And it seems by the context, that the apostle speaks not of rich men and poor men simply as such, but with their adjuncts of good and bad. For presently after he tells us what kind of rich men they are whom he would not have respected, *Even contentious, oppressive, blasphemous*, ver. 6. 7. And what poor men they are whom he would not have disrespected, *Even such as have faith and love*, ver. 5.

And now I could heartily wish, that the Quakers were as sincere contemners of the worldly honour, as their homely and uncomplimental behaviour does pretend to; and that all Christians were in that sense as much Quakers as they. But notwithstanding all these pretensions, I will suggest a few things to them, worthy perhaps, of their most serious consideration.

A man may be a predominant lover of the world in other respects, though he seem to himself perfectly dead to the honours of it.

A man may be as true a lover of worldly honour, though he seems to neglect, and do indeed neglect the modish expressions of it, as another man; and take as carnal a pleasure in *thee* and *thou*, as in *sir* and *madam*.

Plato thought Diogenes as proud in trampling on his fine bed, as he thought Plato to be in having such a bed.

It is an evident argument that they do not choose *thee* and *thou* for humility, or a denying of

the honours of the world; for they contend hotly, that this is the most proper grammatical way of speaking, (it is not a case of conscience, but of grammar;) and they also give the same expression to God himself, when yet they intend to honour him as we do.

As for giving and receiving honour, let them examine themselves, whether they be not desirous to be well thought of, well esteemed of, when they think they deserve it? Whether themselves can take it well, to be slighted and neglected by those of whom they deserve well.

To advance one's own righteousness, to be righteous in one's own eyes, as the Pharisees were; and to stand on our own justification by the perfection of our own holiness, is as proud and legal a spirit as any, and the highest kind of self-honouring. To have men's persons in admiration, to value them as having any thing of themselves in them, is a carnal way of giving honour to men.

MEDITATION IX.

Περὶ ἐυεργεταν, *Or, of public benefactors.*

Another sort of pretenders to a just contempt of the world, and a predominant love of God, are those rich men of the world who bestow a great part of their estates in public works; buildings, or endowings of churches, schools, hospitals, workhouses for the poor, or the like.

This charity is very commendable, especially when we consider, how most great men spend their estates.

But it is more highly commendable in those that have children of their own, and who in their life-time part with so considerable a share of their estates to charitable uses.

But yet even among these, the love of the world may be found predominant. A worldly heart may be found not only among them that squander away their estates prodigally, and all they have in riotous living, *Luke* xv. 13. But even among them that bestow all their goods to feed the poor, 1 *Cor.* xiii. 3. It was a plausible argument that the Pharisees used to our Saviour, when they argued, that a certain gentleman loved their nation, because he had built them a synagogue. But I do not think it to be a concluding argument, to prove the predominant love of God. For this, as well as building and garnishing the sepulchres of the prophets, may agree to an hypocritical generation.

How plausible and commendable soever therefore the charity of these great benefactors may be, yet if any such benefactor design, and provide for the celebration, and perpetuation of his own name, more than the advancement of the name of God, and the propagation of religion and virtue in the world, he will be found ultimately to sacrifice to that great idol, self-interest, and not to God.

If any such benefactor build up churches of stone, and at the same time, hate, demolish, or neglect the living temples of God, and love not his saints above all other men, it is but like the silly mockery of those whom the Gospel exposes to contempt, that honoured the dead prophets

with many outward shows, and in the mean time persecuted the living to death. Or if any rob Peter to gratify Paul; build almshouses, out of the alms that they have kept back out of the gain of oppression and usury. It is possible a man may build and endow schools for the instruction of others, and yet himself remain in a state of ignorance, not caring to know even so much as the necessary things that belong to his peace. That a man may build work-houses for others, and yet sit down careless and slothful in the matters of his own soul, nor take pains to work out the salvation thereof. That a man may provide comfortably for the future state of widows, and impotent in this world, and yet make no provision for his own eternity in another, and so (if I may allude to the apostle) be poor, whilst he makes many rich; or at least, relieves their poverty.

All external acts of charity and beneficence, as well as of devotion, are compatible to the animal life, as well as the divine, and may be acted over as plausibly to a purblind observer, by a self-lover, or a lover of the world, as by a lover of the Father.

MEDITATION X.

Of the pretenders to righteousness.

As the righteous Lord loveth righteousness, so certainly the predominant lovers of righteousness are lovers of the righteous Lord. Looking

upon these, one cannot but love them at first sight, as it is said of Christ. This righteousness is such a qualification, as that without it no man can have the confidence to lay any claim to the Gospel character of a good man. It seems to be so famous a species of virtue, that it is in Scripture tropology put for goodness or virtue in general, as fortitude was among the heathens, *fortes creantur fortibus et bonis*, [the brave are born of the brave and good.]

Sacrifices were of divine institution, and an honourable way of men's drawing nigh to God; and rightly offered up, were very acceptable to him, yet charity is preferred before them, (*I will have mercy*, &c.) and yet righteousness seems to have the precedency of charity itself. If the obligation to justice be not stronger than the obligation to mercy, yet it seems to have a priority, and requires to be first served, if there be a competition; for charity itself looks like a kind of felony, if it antevert righteousness, being a giving away of that which is of right another man's.

But as there are many things called unrighteousness, which indeed deserve not to be so clamored against, (which I think will fall under some of my future meditations,) so I doubt there is a great deal that is magnified for righteousness that deserves not to be so celebrated.

For suppose one of these pretenders to righteousness be ever so exact in matters of dealing with his neighbour, just in matters of bargain, faithful in matters of trust, punctual in payment of debts, wages, promises, if yet he be unjust to God in with-holding his heart from him, to whom

it is due, and entertain the world or carnal self, in the highest room, there he is a lover of the world, and not of the Father; as truly as a wife is unrighteous, who, although she does not waste her husband's estate, yet gives herself away from him, and opens her bosom to a stranger.

The righteousness that will denominate a man a lover of God, must be in conjunction with faith, meekness, temperance, charity, and purity; if our righteousness be not so, it is some spurious, or mechanical thing.

But is it possible that a man should be thus exactly righteous, and yet not a lover of the Father?

Why not? That self-love, the love of the world, may be the very spring from which external righteousness does flow. To be seen of men, accepted of men, to maintain a good reputation among men, and to have a good credit with them, was the best principle from which the righteousness of the Pharisees proceeded; which yet was as exact as most men can pretend to, so exact, that they would not cozen the Levite of a little mint, or cummin.

How many of these righteous men may we see every where, who notwithstanding their pretensions to justice, make no conscience of robbing God of the time which he has consecrated for his own service, and the poor of that part of their estates which God has assigned for their use.

They are so punctual in matter of commutative justice, that they challenge any man to say black is their eyes, and yet all their neighbours

know them to be black mouthed; which they show by their profane cursing or swearing, whereby they wrong God, or their reviling calumniations, back-bitings and detractions, whereby they wrong their neighbour.

However righteousness is a lovely character and a character of a lover of God, yet it is very necessary we should examine well whether our righteous conversation proceed from a righteous principle, whether it be universal and permanent, and whether it be accompaned with the faith and charity which go for the constitution of it; or whether it be not superstitiously designed as meritorious of favour and friendship at the hands of God. If so, thy righteousness becomes unrighteousness.

MEDITATION XI.

Of non-conformists.

Lord, what a dust is raised in this nation about conformity and non-conformity! Let the dew of thy grace lay it, before the rain fall, and there come a shower of persecution to do it! Alas, what pity it is that so many men, so wise, so pious, and so learned, should so differ one from another, and that in a matter of so great consequence; and yet all of them so doubtful, that they will scarce say themselves are in the right; or at least so modest, that they will scarce say the other is in the wrong. It is not so great a controversy as was of old, when the question

was, who were the prophets of the Lord and who the priests of Baal? And yet it is to be feared that God must manifest himself by fire before it will be determined.

Is it not strange and sad, that they that profess one (one and the same) God, faith, baptism, should yet themselves not be one! Lord, how hast thou forsaken the earth! How hast thou hid truth from the eyes of men! How is the spirit of discerning failed from among us! Here is utterly a fault among us somewhere, and a great one too; and yet be it where it will, it must needs be that many learned and holy men are guilty of it. For they are as shy to impute it to their adversaries, as they are loth to assume it to themselves.

This indeed makes the case less sad, but it makes it more strange. It is neither in my skill nor will, to enter into the controversy between them; for it is very nice, and I see no hopes of accommodating the difference by any amicable interposition or argument. But what then? Shall I sit down and be satisfied, saying with my Saviour, *It must needs be that offences come*? Alas! This affords me no satisfaction, so long as the next words stand of equal divine authority, *Woe unto that man by whom they come.*

If I in the integrity of my heart only lament the breach, some stander-by or other will be ready, with the midwife in the history, *Gen.* xxxviii. 29. to let fly at the one party or the other, and cry, *This breach be on thee;* and in despite of them, either in the conformist or the non-conformist, shall be a Pharez in the house of Israel.

What shall I do then? Why possibly among the one and the other, there may be found some that are lovers of the world, more than of God. I will endeavour to separate these, the vile from the precious. And then as for the sincere lovers of God, of what persuasions soever, they will be sure to escape at the last, though it should be as by fire.

Now, methinks, I may divide these disabled persons, as our Saviour did his eunuchs, into three sorts. First, such as have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom, &c. Secondly, such as are born eunuchs. Thirdly, such as are made eunuchs of men; non-conformists out of judgment, by virtue of education, or out of some worldly respects, or carnal principle.

The ecclesiastical eunuchs, that are such for the kingdom of heaven's sake, do not fall under my consideration. That they are such, themselves do aver, and their charitable adversaries are loth to suspect, nay, they are ready to say of them as the pharisaical scribes said of St Paul, Acts xxiii. 9. *We find no evil in these men, but if a spirit or an angel have spoken to them, let us not fight against God.* We find no fault with the temper or conversation of these men; therefore, if they be thus persuaded in their conscience-let us not oppress or persecute them, seeing the root of the matter is found in them. By what arguments they come to be persuaded in their consciences to be such, I need not consider. Themselves have propounded them openly and plentifully enough, insomuch that all know the men, and their argumentations.

The second sort therefore are such, as are non-conformists by education, (as it were from their mother's womb,) who thereby received a prejudice, before they could judge of things that differ. I do not know that there are any such, but it is said there are, and it is not unlikely, for we know what the former times were, and what power breeding and education have to form the notions, and fashion the opinions of men. If these should hit of the right way, it is no thanks to them. However, not choosing it by a mature judgment, but being fashioned thereunto by company and converse, it cannot be supposed that they act ingenuously or rationally. And if there be any that give no better account of their non-conformity than this, that they were so bred and so taught, I think they themselves are carnal, though the things they hold are ever so orthodox. It is a vain non-conformity, as well as conversation, that has no other ground but this, that it is received by tradition from the fore-fathers. And it may truly be said, they worship they know not what, that have nothing to say for their way of worship, but, our fathers worshipped on this mountain.

They say there are of the third sort that are made eunuchs of men, that in their dissenting are actuated as carnal men, by obstinate humour, or worldly interest. Some say they are proud and wilful, and conceited; some say they are idle, and therefore they cry, Let us have our liberty, let us sacrifice unto our God in our own way. Some say they are obstinate and unruly, *They regard not thee, O king, nor the decree that thou hast signed.*

Others say they are actuated by worldly interest, either the interest of their reputations, which by their levity they are loth to forfeit with the people; or their estates, which are advanced and not impaired by their sufferings. I confess some of these charges seem to be strange and almost incredible. Others are perhaps too true. God will judge their hearts and principles; in the mean time, I would they should know that God does not estimate any man by his professions, be they ever so specious; nor his opinions, be they ever so orthodox; nor by his outward form, be it ever so pure and refined. It is easy, (I wish it to be not ordinary,) for man to be carnal in a fine spiritual mode.

And I beseech you, sirs, lay it to heart; whosoever prefers ease or honour, popular esteem, the good opinion of a party, or an opportunity of making himself and his name great, before unity and order, before the peace and settlement of the church, yea, or before his liberty and capacity of ministering in holy things, and propagating the Gospel of Christ, is so far carnal, and a lover of the world.

Faction and schism, and sedition, are works of the flesh, as well as flatteries, and bare compliance.

The propagation of a party, and the advancement of a name, are a part of the world, as well as fat benefices. And where they are preferred before peace and charity, do denominate a man a lover of the world, as well as those where they are preferred before truth. For God is peace and love, as well as truth.

To run away from ceremonial uncleanness, and at the same time to run into moral:

To be shy of white garments, and yet free to entertain black passions:

To avoid the sign of the cross, and yet to live in the spirit of crossness and contradiction, is as foolish as to be frighted at an apparition of a devil, and yet confidently to follow a real one in all his works, as most men do. And it is so much the more foolish, as it adds hypocrisy to the folly of worldly mindedness.

MEDITATION XII.

Of Conformists.

When I begin to think of these, the words of the prophet Oded occur to me, 2. *Chron.* 28. which he spake to the children of Israel, who purposed to keep under their captive brethren, *Are there not sins with you, even with you, against the Lord your God?* For it is not my business to consider whether conformity be in its own nature good or bad, but supposing conformity to be good, to consider what conformists are, notwithstanding they are carnal, and lovers of the world. For as non-conformity, with all its pretences of purity, truth and simplicity, will not justify the unseasonable or schismatical non-conformist; so neither will the regularity, peaceableness and decency of conformity justify the carnal and ill-principled conformist; no more than the honourableness of marriage, will justify them that go together like brutes.

So far as I can apprehend or discern, there are three sorts of conformists:

Some out of conscience, some of out carelessness, and some out of covetousness.

Those that are conformists out of conscience, seem to be of two sorts; such as think that way in its own nature the best, and do in their judgment choose it, and think it reasonable to impose it; and such as are only persuaded in their consciences that it is not evil, and that it is best for peace sake to submit to it.

I see plainly, that all good men's consciences are not of one size, and I know no one below the Omniscient that can exactly take measure of them. Both these therefore I leave to the Judge of consciences.

But there seems also to be a number of the two latter sorts, whom all their conformity will not preserve from the censure of our apostle.

That some conform out of carelessness, without making any question for conscience sake, never having considered, or weighed the nature of the thing, but acting merely upon a public conscience, is too apparent by that little or nothing that they have to say in defence of themselves, or this way, when they are opposed in it; but with him in 2 Sam. xvi. 18. *Whom this people choose, his will I be.*

That some conform out of covetousness, will appear at least by the confession of those, who in words at length have declared, that they were of mean fortunes, and knew not how to live; otherwise they had no mind to it.

However they may glory in their conformity, yet sure the church has no cause to glory in

them; for they are but a company of pressed soldiers, and will either be easily routed, or run away. These love the world more than truth, which they take no pains to discover; and the peace of their consciences, which they take no care to preserve.

The careless prefer the custom and example of men, before right reason, judgment and conscience; and though they should chance to hit of the right, yet they act wrongly. The covetous prefer the bread of priests, before the priests' office, 1 *Sam.* ii. 36. with the degenerate posterity of Eli. It is fit indeed, that they that preach the Gospel, should live of the Gospel; but to preach the Gospel only to get a livelihood or a living, looks like Simony inverted; a giving of holy things, to get money.

The heathen satyrist laughed at those magpie poets, who were instructed by the sound of their empty stomachs; and taught music, by the chiming of their own bellies; and I cannot see how these men are less ridiculous, I am sure they are more presumptuous.

The careless and inconsiderate, though their oblation should be of clean beasts, yet at best do but offer the sacrifice of fools. The covetous are either inconsiderate, and so they fall on, and never say grace; but, like Saul's hungry soldiers, fly upon the spoil, and in their hunger eat without discretion, blood and all; or else if they entertain any sober thoughts, the love and cares of the world presently spring up and choke them. Whether are more excusable, it matters not, in a case where both are inexcusable.

But this is plain, that where a doubt lies between truth and falsehood, he that admits worldly interest for an umpire to decide the controversy, is a lover of the world; and if worldly considerations be the predominant motives, let the matter he embraces be ever so true, he is false to his God and his own conscience in embracing it. The profession of the Gospel is a good thing, and yet the professors of it that are actuated by a carnal principle, are nevertheless bad men.

As to both these, I will not say, that every non-conformist is carnal, that will not part with his life, upon the same account as he parts with his liberty, or livelihood; nor that every conformist is carnal, who conforms with some regret, and had much rather no such things were required; yet surely they are farthest removed from the foul character of lovers of the world, whose consciences are most strongly persuaded, and who are actuated by no interest but the interests of truth and righteousness, in what they do, or leave undone.

MEDITATION XIII.

Of the education of children.

The apostacy of man, and the depravedness of his present state, has made education necessary, and yet at the same time very painful. He is not only an ass's colt for folly, but a wild ass's colt for stubbornness, and untractableness; so that it requires a great deal of wisdom to teach

him, and as much fortitude and patience, in enduring so to do. Both which render them very honourable, and much to be revered by mankind, whom God has qualified for this employment; and it is a pity but the best of men were employed herein, and the best of encouragements were allowed them. But, alas! how few are there to be found in this employment, that are worthy of it! Many that undertake to teach, have themselves never well learned; and many others that are appointed to cultivate the minds, govern the passions, and form the manners of others, are themselves so immoral, so passionate, so uncultivated, that it is pity they should be made keepers of the vineyard, when their own vineyard they cannot keep. And besides these, there are many other corruptions crept into this honourable employment, which do most evidently denominate many of these persons, lovers of the world, more than of God.

What else are those ministers that baptize children into a faith, which afterwards they take no care to make them understand?

What else are those parents that make provision for the bodies, and neglect the souls of their children? Or those tutors, who bear the names, and defray the expenses of their pupils, but do not concern themselves about their manners? They are indeed more properly stewards than tutors. What else are those tutors or masters, that being entrusted to teach youth, do either not teach them, or teach them in a degree that bears no proportion, either to what the subject is capable of receiving, or what reward

they do themselves receive for instructing them? Or if they do skilfully and fully enough instruct them in human learning, yet are careless of divine, putting off that to the parson, or crying, Oh, in those things the children must be taught of God. Alas! What fatal consequences, what ignorance, error and worldliness in riper years, is this neglect the cause of! For by that time youth has withdrawn its hand from the ferule, and its back from the rod, it is usually settled in the temper that it is resolved to be of, and so engaged in some way of worldly pleasure or business or other, as that it is prepossessed, and has no mind or leisure to inquire for a law at the priest's mouth, to hearken to his words, *charm he ever so wisely.* And what else are these masters and servants, who either out of fondness withhold correction, or out of cruel harshness bestow it too liberally; who take pleasure in punishment, without respect to amendment; or out of some base principle, are partial in administering correction?

Not that all different usage of offenders is partiality; nay, rather, it would be partiality to use all offenders, great and small, alike; nor is it partiality always to use unequal degrees of correction to equal offenders. Respect ought to be had to constitutions, both of body and mind, and perhaps some other circumstances. That dose may possibly kill one, that is not sufficient to cure another. The husbandmen of Judea did not thresh their fitches with a threshing instrument, nor the cummin with a cart-wheel; but the bread-corn they bruised, according as their

God instructed them to discretion, *Isa.* xxviii. 26, 27, 28. But the partiality that proceeds from fondness, fear, flattery, covetousness, or the like, and is not according to justice, belongs to the head of worldly wisdom, and is a symptom of a worldly mind. I reckon that correction is a kind of administration of vindictive justice.

What do they prefer most, think ye, that will severely correct a piece of playfulness, idleness, unmannerliness, or it may be a piece of natural slowness or weakness; and in the mean time connive at a great deal of ribaldry, looseness and profaneness?

In short, whatever tutor, master or parent, had rather his pupil, apprentice or child, were a good scholar, or a good artist, than a good man, that endeavours and glories in the former more than in the latter, to him, of right, belongs the black character of a lover of the world.

MEDITATION XIV.

Of the disposers of children to callings.

When children are grown up to a convenient age, parents or guardians use to dispose of them to trades or services, or bestow them in marriage.

They that dispose of them to no employment or calling, nor engage them in any liberal science or honest study, whereby they may be serviceable members of church or commonwealth, because they need no such thing to live by, and

think it is accomplishment enough for them to be able to court, to compliment, to entertain, to game, like a gentleman; are in the judgment of divines, ill stewards of the blessings of God, and sad managers of so great a talent as children are; and that they are severely accountable for such carelessness, cruelty, and injustice.

But they that do not talk like divines, do generally cry, that it is very impolitic; for by learning nothing, they come to learn two of the greatest vices in the world, luxury and idleness; and in one of them, I had almost said all others, for what is it not an inlet to? Besides, it is impolitic not to have some employment or art or other, to which one may have recourse in the greatest extremity, which extremity who knows but may befal him. It was well for the king of Syracuse, that he had a little more learning than his neighbours, that he might at least turn school-master when he was un-kinged.

The steward in the Gospel needed not to have betaken himself to the knavish shift of gratifying his lord's debtors, if he had been well educated in his youth. So that to educate children in some art or science, is pious and politic; but yet the piety of it is ordinarily and easily spoiled.

For what is predominant, think ye, God or the world, with those parents, who, with mere respect to a livelihood, or out of respect to a more plentiful livelihood, dispose of their children to employments in their own nature unlawful; in the management whereof their souls shall as certainly die as their bodies live? These do, in effect, bind them apprentices to the devil, and, as

the poet speaks, *Propter vitam vivendi perdunt causas*, [For the sake of a living destroy the very means of life.]

Perhaps it will be thought there are few such employments; but some there are, surely, perhaps more than will be commonly confessed. What shall we think of the trade of those young females, *Alunt quæ corpore corpus*, [Who prostitute the body for its own support,] as the poet speaks; and of the care of those parents, who, rather than not be panders, will mercenarily prostitute their own wives, which are members of themselves; or deliver up their own daughters, the fruit of their own bodies, to the bodies of other men? I cannot excuse, but yet, methinks, I cannot but pity righteous Lot, and the hospitable Gibeonite, who, to rescue their male guests, offered to expose their females, maidens that had not known men, to the lusts of the sons of Belial.

For aught I know, it was in just judgment of God, that Lot was left to commit incest with those daughters of his, whom he was so forward to prostitute to other men. But to play the pander or the pimp for money, is surely filthy lucre, if there is any in the world; and to sell at the same time both human souls and bodies, must needs be the merchandize of Babylon. What is predominant with those parents or guardians, think ye, although they do not dispose of children into callings and employments absolutely unlawful, yet into those that are apparently dangerous and ensnaring, and which a well confirmed Christian can scarcely manage with safety;

or commit them to the tuition of ignorant, carnal, profane masters, that can teach them nothing that is good save their trades, and it is ten to one will teach them many things which are naught; or that will dispose of their children as servants, into families, where they shall never have precepts or examples to lead them to virtue, but many temptations and inducements to sin and sensuality, and in the mean time employment only for the hands, and entertainment only for the back and stomach?

Whether these people be actuated by a worldly spirit, or by the Spirit of God, is easy for any man, whose eyes are open, to discern; for do not they proclaim, that they prefer the body before the soul, and mere living before living well? Although this be not downright destroying them, because the grace of God may miraculously intervene, and preserve the poor children in the midst of fire, yet it is no thanks to these merciless tyrants that put them in; for they devote them to destruction. I do not see but that they are as much guilty of murder as David, and of a worse murder than he, (whom yet the kindest divine that I have met with would never undertake to excuse,) who, though he did not fall on Uriah himself, yet placed him in the front of the battle, and then deserted him. And therefore the Spirit of God, the best casuist, says plainly, *That he slew him with the sword of the children of Ammon.* And although these parents do not themselves put out the eyes of their children, yet if they dispose of them into an enemy's country, and let in the Philistines on them to do it; f

they resign them up wholly to an ignorant, carnal, and graceless society, they are as treacherous as Delilah, though erewhile they were fond of them, and hugged them in their bosoms, and dandled them on their knees; yet they are giving them up to destruction.

MEDITATION XV.

Of persons that marry, and give in marriage.

MARRIAGE is now become necessary to the greatest part of mankind, and is made warrantable, yea, and honourable too, by the ordination of God. I have already allowed its just praises to a single state, (vide Med. 2.) and I hope there are many that live in that state, pure and undefiled. But to oblige ourselves, or any that are under our power, so to live, I imagine proves a snare to many, and perhaps an inconvenience to all.

But besides those that vow virginity on a religious account, there are a great many that prolong the single state of their children in spite of their inclinations, on a worldly account, in the grossest sense. And what can I think of those parents, who, knowing the inclinations of their children, of a just age, constitution, and discretion, and having fair opportunities of matching them comfortably, do yet constrain them to pass *the flower of their youth*, as the apostle stiles it, and to stay for so many hundreds or thousands, before they will part with them. I know there

are a great many shuffling excuses; but to prefer portions or jointures, an honourable or worshipful alliance, a particular serviceableness to ourselves, or to our affairs, before that peace, purity, satisfaction and contentment, which is in a desired conjugal state, must needs be a symptom of a worldly mind.

If these parents do not behave themselves harshly and bitterly against their children, according to the apostle's phrase, (*Eph.* vi. 4.) yet I am sure they behave themselves unseemly towards them, according to this phrase elsewhere.

It does not belong to my meditations at this time, to show the mischievous consequences of such restraint, whether lewdness and wantonness, inconvenient and pernicious matching of themselves, uncomfortable melancholy, diseases, and perhaps death itself. But I am heartily sorry to find this symptom of worldliness there, where it ought least of all to be found.

The Lord pity all those who never saw that they offended in this matter, till it was too late to see it! Of the like character are all those parents and guardians, who by threatenings or other severities, by perpetual importunities and solicitations, do force their children, for mere worldly respects, to accept of matches against their inclination and approbation. If there can be any defiling a maid without deflowering her, this is it; and it is the more abominable, because it is parents defiling their own children. And we need not wonder to see so bad consequences of so bad premises; no wonder if they prove to love where they marry not, who were forced to marry where they loved not.

But of all kinds of violences, methinks self-forcing is the most unnatural; and merely for the love of land or money, to commit violence on one's own reason, judgment, affection, and discretion, is next to barbarous; nay, I question whether there be any thing in barbarity like it.

It was good policy, and is brought for an example of good oratory, *Sic sacrilegus, sic fur, sic flagitiorum omnium vitiorumque princeps, ac est bonus imperator*, [although sacrilegious, and a robber, a ring-leader of every crime and villany, yet he is a clever emperor.]

But how it should be good divinity, or how it should ever be the language of the heart of any divines, "She is ignorant of the things of religion, proud, carnal, and many ways unsuitable; but she will make a good wife, for she has so much land, or so much money;" that this, I say, should be the language of any Christian's heart, I should be loth to believe, but how shall I help it? For what pretence can I have for my unbelief, when I do see so frequent examples before my eyes?

Does not every body, every day, see men and women professing religion, marrying, or giving themselves in marriage, to mates that are little else than enemies to religion, plainly preferring the advancement of their estates, and worldly interest, before their spiritual advantages, and the comfort of their souls, or indeed lives either? Oh but they themselves know no hurt by them, they have better thoughts of them; love is blind. Would to God, Christian people would deal sincerely with themselves, and then let any of these answer and say, whether they run on marriage,

or blindfold or no. If not, then they have either observed or inquired. And if both on observation and inquiry they have found nothing very desirable, but the estate or the portion, I would fain know what is the predominant motive. And to say love is blind, is a woful shift; it is but a sitting down tamely, and being content with the character of a fool.

It is too true, that the love of the world does so blind the eyes of men, that they can see none of these infirmities, deformities, inequalities, nor ill consequences neither, that do plainly enough accompany or attend their matching; but this does not render them the more excusable, nor, methinks, should it give them any ease.

It was a little alleviation of blind Samson's misery, grinding in the prison, to think that the Philistines had put out his eyes by force. But for men to put out their own eyes, and then cry they cannot see; or expect to be pitied in their drudgery, is utterly in vain. Their bondage and drudgery indeed renders them pitiable, but the blindness that is alleged for the cause of it, renders them ridiculous. But shall we think then that every man and woman is bound to seek after the best, and accept of none but the best persons in marriage?

I shall not trouble myself about this captious question. But sure I am, goodness with every lover of God ought to be a more powerful charm, than either wealth or beauty. It is the best match where they all meet, but that will not be always. However, if a man cannot have them all, he can tell which he is resolved to have, and

which he can be best content to want. This I am sure of, if it be not a man's duty absolutely to seek the best wife that he can get, it is much less his duty to aim at the richest. I conceive the whole world of wicked men and women is justly divided into unbelievers and hypocrites, and I cannot but wonder that men should think themselves bound by the express commandment not to match themselves unequally with unbelievers, and yet make no scruple at all of unequal yoking themselves with hypocrites; and such I am confident God reckons all unregenerate persons to be.

I conclude this black list with those, who rather than not have fortunes, will make their way to them by felony, at one blow breaking the fifth, seventh, eighth, and tenth commandments. For aught I can perceive, the marriage must be lawful, before the conjunction can be excused from being adulterous.

And he that takes a wife against the consent of parents or guardians, and against the prescribed method of the law, drinks stolen waters, though he may say, (as I have heard children,) that he takes them as his own.

Nay, though parents had no right in the disposing of their children to marriage, yet there is a shameful violation of commutative justice, in stealing fortunes, for which there is no satisfaction given.

And indeed they that steal fortunes, are commonly such as are not able to buy them, or pay proportionable jointures for them. But to what a height of worldly baseness does this arrive,

when this adultery and felony are exercised on children, when their infancy and estates, which ought to secure them, are both instrumental to betray them. To ensnare the child because she is a child, is like robbing the poor because he is poor.

——— *Magnum et memorabile nomen,*
Stulta dolis astuti hominis si victa puella est.

[A great and honourable name, forsooth, is gained, if a giddy girl be overcome by the treachery of a cunning man.)

MEDITATION XVI.

Of patrons.

How agreeable it is in a well constituted church, that mere lay men should have the power of presenting ministers to benefices, and what is the way in other churches, or whether their way or our's be better, does not belong to my present meditation. It seems likely to be attended with many conveniencies, if the people of each particular parochial church should freely elect their own pastor. But what inconveniencies might attend that too in time, I cannot tell, and therefore I will not determine any thing about it. I do not apprehend it to be any where contrary to the canon of the Scripture, that presentations be made to pastoral charges as they are here in England, considering the constitution and circumstances wherein we are. But that

among these patrons there is a great deal of corruption, and many things that denominate them carnal, and lovers of the world, is too obvious.

Simony indeed, as our law understands it, seems to be a sin of man's making, and I doubt men deal with it accordingly; few reckoning their consciences to be bound by it, otherwise than their oath that they take against it, does somewhat straiten them; which straits they think they may safely use all possible shifts to be delivered out of, never mattering to be *casti*, [innocent,] if they can but be *cauti*, [wary.]

But supposing it to be only forbidden by a human law, yet the reasons whereon that law is grounded, seem to be so just and strong, that the law does oblige on an higher account than its own. And many presentations will be found to be corrupt and carnal in the sight of God, which do not appear simoniacal in the eyes of men, or the sense of the law. To be a pastor to a congregation and a steward to any part of the household of God, is certainly an honourable employment, and does require much skill, faithfulness, and industry. To feed, and clothe, and conduct souls, is an employment which the great God does not disown, neither does he refuse to be called their Shepherd; and the stewards which he deputes must needs be so able, faithful and painful, as to give each of his family their meat in due season. It must needs therefore be the duty as it will be the great honour of all patrons, as far as in them lies, to prefer overseers to the flock of Christ, according to their worthiness and

fitness. Of how great use to the kingdom of Christ and the salvation of souls, the settling of such pastors in congregations has been, and consequently how great an honour those conscientious patrons are worthy of, who have been the instruments of their settlement, I can more easily contemplate with admiration, than tell to satisfaction. Who can, with a heart unbroken, consider the manifold fatal consequences of setting unworthy and unqualified pastors over the congregations of Christ's flock! The consequences are no less than the very ruin of multitudes of souls.

And what shall I think then of those patrons, who never at all regard the quality of the person, but the quantity of the gift? They remember surely the sin of Jeroboam, who made priests of the lowest of the people; and therefore are resolved to run far enough from him, and make pastors of the richest of the people. But their covetousness is no less carnal than his prodigality. They will not be so base as those of whom the prophet complained, *That they polluted the holy office for handfuls of barley, and pieces of bread;* but they will not stick to do it for handfuls of silver, and pieces of money. There is no such famine in Samaria surely, that an ass's head should be so much esteemed, and the souls of men be fed with dung. No, no, the famine is in the appetites of covetous patrons, who care not what silly refuse of men they present, nor how they infect or starve the souls of men, so they can but fill their own pockets with the shekels of the sanctuary, with gold chymically extracted out of these leaden priests.

There are a more wary sort, that can make a shift to escape the censure of the law, who are yet actuated by as strong a worldly love as these. They can match a daughter or an handmaid with a presentation, saying to their clerk, as Boaz to his kinsman, *At what time thou buyest the field, thou must buy it also at the hands of Ruth.*

Or if sufficient security be given for the resignation of it, to see how grateful the clerk will prove within that time, or to see whether by that time a son or daughter may not need it for a portion, it makes the matter a little the more safe, but never a whit the more honest. For considering the great importance of this matter, whosoever prefers consanguinity or affinity, acquaintance, or importunity of friends, before learning and piety, and aptness to teach, must needs appear to be actuated by a worldly spirit, and to bear the black brand of our apostle.

Alas! How rare is pure, sincere, ingenuous, judicious proceeding in this matter. How few pastors are married to their flocks, without the predominant mediation of friends, monies, importunity, good turns received, or expected, relation, or some such thing, which is alien to the true qualifications of a minister!

MEDITATION XVII.

Of Chaplains.

The employment of a chaplain is accounted honourable, by virtue of the relation that such

bear to princes, or peers, or persons of great estate or quality. But it seems to be more honourable, on the account of the relation that they bear to the great God, whose agents and messengers they are. For as the pastors and rectors of diocesses and parishes are accounted God's embassadors, even by Scripture authority; so these domestics may well be accounted his *nuncios* or envoys, and their duty, no doubt, is to deliver errands from God, to them that are called gods, but must die like men. And they seem to have a greater advantage, and a fairer opportunity of doing good, than their brethren.

If Timothy, who, for ought I can perceive, was no chaplain, was yet charged to charge the great and rich to be humble and religious; much more is it the duty of these, who may have the care of their prince or patron, when the bishop or the pastor cannot. And to be the instrument of converting one prince and his court, yea, or one peer and his family to the serious and diligent service of God, of how great honour and use would this be! Oh that all our chaplains would propound to themselves the prophet Nathan for their pattern; and his success in bringing David to repentance would be for their encouragement.

It is not fit indeed to be so clownish, as to say to princes, *Ye are wicked;* but yet it is fit enough to say, *Ye are the men*, with Nathan; and with Elijah, *ye are the troublers of Israel.* And the same Elihu says, *It is not fit to give flattering titles to men.* I would fain know of these men, if they do not charge their patrons, and warn them, who

shall; and where their blood will be required, if they die in their sins?

I hope there are many upright men in this relation in the world, who design not so much to live on their patrons, as that their patrons may live to God; to sanctify their tables, rather than to be fed at them.

But if there be any that prefer ease and secular advantage, before the discharge of a good conscience; that seek to be accepted of their patrons, more than to approve themselves to God, their great Master, the sacredness of their function will not excuse them from being lovers of the world.

What then shall we think of those, who because one puts into their mouths and purses, are silent, and say nothing, or to no purpose, in matters that ought to be spoken loud and often, plainly and frequently; and so for a bribe, betray the souls of them, whom they are entertained on purpose to preserve; or, as the text speaks, transgress for a morsel of bread; who stand by and see the sinful, sensual, proud, covetous, profane conversation of their patrons, and of their families and retinue, and never yet so much as once expostulate with them, as Eli, *Why do ye such things?* Nor softly whisper in their ears, *Nay, my brethren, do not so wickedly.* Such a chaplain was Amaziah, who prophesied at Bethel.

And what of those, who do plainly encourage their patrons to pride, idleness, excess, oppression, and to a formality and indifference in religion; persuading them, that so much strictness and ex-

actness does not become their quality; magnifying an half-faced devotion for perfect; and that for a very good deed, which they know is done by halves?

And what of those, who run into the same excess of riot, the same sensuality, it may be into the same profaneness too, for compliance sake, and to humour those on whom they have dependance?

Such a chaplain was the young Levite of Bethlehem-Judah, who, for a suit of apparel, and about twenty shilling a year, and his victuals, did not scruple any idolatry that his master Micah was given to, *Judges* xvii.

In any way to prefer self-entertainment or advancement, or the humouring, pleasuring, or gratifying of men, before the exercise of grace, the using of a good conscience, the reformation of sin, the promotion of godliness, and the advancement of the glory of God, is a symptom of a worldly mind; though it be found among pastors of congregations, or chaplains of families.

MEDITATION XVII.

Of judges and magistrates.

The great Judge of the world has deputed here and there some among men, to be his vicegerents in the administration of justice. This certainly renders their employment very honourable, and he is a very bold and wicked man who dares contemn so much as the reflections of

the authority of God or the Majesty of Heaven, at what rebound soever. But as this relation renders them honourable, and a sort of gods, or sons of God; so it does engage them to the greatest purity and impartiality imaginable, lest they bring a reproach on their Lord, and the sons of Belial take occasion to invert the proverb, and say, *As are the servants, such is their master.* The truth is, they that are imitators of the divine purity, justice and goodness, are in a far better sense the sons of God, than they that only act in the world by his commission. For how far soever the inferior multitude are bound to obey them, it is evident that the God, whose pure eyes cannot endure to behold iniquity, does not farther own them for his, than as they act by his authority, that is, agreeably to his holy nature, and just laws. I wish it were generally looked on as a traiterous position against the Majesty of Heaven, that any man may act contrary to his nature and laws (which is a taking up arms against him) by his authority. Nay, the commission of these men is so far from patronizing any of their iniquity, that I doubt not but that they who pervert justice, and commit violence and cruelty in his name, shall be destroyed with a double destruction, and be twice condemned; once for being ungodly sons of men, and again, for being ungodly sons of God.

If a righteous king will hang a man who commits simple murder, he will not fail to hang and quarter him who commits murders and massacres, and produces his commission to justify the same.

Now among these grandees of the world, it may be suspected that there are many lovers of the world more than of God.

What else are all they, that either injuriously invade the subjects of other princes or rigorously rule over their own, forgetting that themselves have a Master in heaven?

They that prefer the gratification of their own lusts, the advancement of their own name, the enlargement of their dominions, or treasures, before truth, and charity, and the peace and welfare of the people committed to them, are of this breed.

They that abuse their authority, either in establishing iniquity by laws, (which is a setting of God's seal, the sacred sanction of a law, to a thing contrary to his own nature and word,) or ordaining severe and ruining penalties against light offences, (which is a prostituting the authority of Heaven,) or by making laws on purpose to make men offenders, nor caring whether they be broken or kept, so themselves may but have either the pleasure or profit of exacting the penalty; which is utterly unlike the government of God, all whose restraints and threatenings do principally aim at the good and happiness of his creatures, belong to this head.

And what else are all they that accept the persons of men in judgment, or in the execution of laws; that set justice to sale; that either defer or destroy the cause of the poor, because he is poor; or acquit the guilty, because he is rich, because they fear him, or love him, or are akin to him? Is not this to prefer worldly respects

and self-interest before righteousness, and the world before God? Let God himself be heard speaking to these men, who are so kind to Benhadad, because he is their brother, forsooth; 1 Kings xx. 42. *Because thou hast let go out of thy hands a man whom I appointed to utter destruction*, &c.

And what else are they, who in the execution of justice, are influenced more by private displeasure, than zeal for God or righteousness; who, under the cloak of law, do gratify their own sentiment, and, like justice Jehu, revenge their own quarrel, and serve their own malicious inclinations, whilst they pretend to be zealous for the law, or for the Lord?

MEDITATION XIX.

Concerning arbitrators, electors and jurors.

When I consider the angry and malicious natures of men, who are so apt to take offence at every small matter, and so desirous to be revenged on the offender; and the latitude of the law, that makes so many things actionable, and the incredible multitude of men learned in the law, or learners of the law, many of whom are very ready to foment discontents, and promote trivial suits; together with the sinful concomitants and fatal effects of going to law, I cannot but think the employment of arbitrators exceedingly necessary, and highly commendable; and I would commend it above all worldly business, (though pos-

sibly it may deserve a better name,) to persons of good educations and understandings, estates and leisure; who commonly squander away their time to no purpose, or to bad ones, because, forsooth, they have nothing to do. In good earnest, I think that a studiousness to prevent or compose differences among neighbours, a tender care to preserve or restore peace and charity, and good will among men, and wise endeavours to prevent or rescind the expence of estates in law, does argue a mind divinely disposed, a truly noble and generous temper, and is an employment near of kin to the errand of the Son of God; *On earth peace*, &c.

And because it is a thing so excellent in its own nature, and commonly attended with so great difficulties, dangers and obloquies, it hath pleased the great Lover of mankind, the Arbitrator between God and man, to give us the greatest encouragement to it; Matt. v. *Blessed are the peace-makers, for they shall be called the children of God.* And well they may, for he is the *God of peace*, and his name is *Love.*

But alas! With how little purity and integrity is this excellent employment managed; what invasions has the worldly spirit made on it, and what defilements has it mingled with it!

The good king of Judah, I recollect, bade his judges remember, *That they were to judge for God, and not for man*, 2 Chron. xix. 6. But I doubt our arbitrators, many of them, are of a different party, and arbitrate for man, and not for God; I mean, either for themselves or for their friend, and not for truth and righteousness.

Are not they lovers of the world more than of God, who suffer justice to be perverted, and consent to the crushing and oppressing of a righteous cause, merely to gratify the humour or importunity, or to conciliate or maintain the favour or friendship of the person that chooses them? Are not they very gross, who invert Moses, as forsaking Israel, and favouring Egypt, as having an eye *to the recompence of reward?* He was a corrupt judge, who, though he received none, yet looked that money should have been given him of Paul. And how remote soever this may be from popular observation, yet God, who takes notice of the hearts of men, does discern this very covetous cast of the eye; and if the respect to the recompence weigh down the respect to righteousness, he will sentence this Balaam for a worldly arbitrator, for having so much as a mind to be unrighteous, though, perhaps, he cannot or dare not show it.

How many of this breed there are I know not. I suppose few or none will confess it; but I fear the God who judges impartially will find many. And the number of those that live on this trade, and get as much by making peace as other men do by managing suits, does too plainly declare before men that there are too many.

But besides these, I have observed many, who, not sincerely regarding the merits of the cause, improve all the cunning and dexterous skill that they have, in the niceties of law, to baffle or ravel, or invalidate the just cause of their opponent; and, without any respect to right or wrong, account it their honour to stand up stiffly for the

person that chose them, and to speak and wrangle much in his behalf, merely that they may get the name of faithful arbitrators, and may be thought not to lose the day, without taking much pains to get it. Nay, some I have known so faithful, forsooth, to the person that chose them, that they suffer themselves to be bound up, and engaged not to yield a jot further than he shall give them leave, though righteousness, or the reason of the thing require ever so much. Rare faithfulness to their friend indeed, but shameful unfaithfulness to God and their own consciences! He that accepts of the office of an arbitrator on these terms, beforehand laid down, betrays a great meanness and vanity of mind; and he that acts by these terms afterwards, betrays a great deal of cowardice and falsity.

It seems not very improper to this head, to think a little of electors, who, by their votes and suffrages, are concerned to choose officers, magistrates, members of parliament, or the like. For these electors are a kind of arbitrators, determining the case between competitors.

That this is a business of great importance all will confess, as one on which the right observation of laws, and the administration of justice and judgment, and consequently the welfare of a kingdom, does much depend.

To have no regard to the qualifications of the person to be elected, but to vote at a venture; to vote for him who speaks first, or comes next, without any regard to his fitness for counsel or business, is a point of great folly.

To be led by the predominant consideration of relation or dependance, or to be influenced by humour or the pleasure of other men, or by a respect to private thanks or rewards, or entertainments, not regarding the just qualifications of a person fit to manage such employment, seems to add baseness to the folly, and argues a mind preferring private consideration before the public good, that is, the world before God.

Neither is slavish fear a less worldly principle. The poor heathens are to be pitied, who worship the devil for fear he should hurt them. But to advance men whom we suspect to be of a hurtful nature, into a capacity of hurting us, for fear of being hurt by them, is a nonsensical folly fit to be chastened.

If I should, under this head, take occasion to reflect on the generality of jurymen at assizes and sessions, it would make this meditation bulky and bitter; for all those who proceed not according to evidence, that act not from judgment and conscience, that knowingly favour the guilty, through foolish pity, base covetousness, worldly love, or slavish fear; or oppress the innocent, because he is poor, friendless, speechless, a stranger, or an enemy, do proclaim themselves to be lovers of the world, more than of God. And, O Lord, how loud is the cry! It reaches to the ends of the earth, and goes up to heaven.

MEDITATION XX.

Of landlords and tenants.

The holy psalmist somewhere says, Ps. cxv. 16. *The heavens are the Lord's, but the earth hath he given to the children of men;* which is not to be understood according to the sense of the profane poet, *Jupiter in cælis, Cæsar regit omnia terris,* [Jove reigns in heaven, but Cæsar rules on earth,] as if God had thrown the earth out of his hands, and would take no more care of it, or had committed it wholly to the arbitrary government of men; for still it is true, *The earth is the Lord's;* and however he has granted the possesion of it to men, yet himself keeps the propriety, and the rich are his tenants, and the poor his under-tenants. Now among those children of men to whom God is said to give the earth, some have so little a portion of it, that they may say with Him who was rich, but for our sakes became poor, that they have not where to lay their heads; or at best they can challenge no more of the earth for their's than where they may lay their dead bodies. But yet in this unequal distribution there is no iniquity; for though God, in dividing the earth among men, do not proceed by the law of gavelkind, yet he has made provision for his poor under-tenants, having charged his landed tenants, (whom we more improperly call landlords,) to see that they be not starved, nor so much as oppressed. It is true and proper speaking to say, that God has ap-

pointed the rich, all the rich, to be overseers of the poor, and has declared that he accounts them his enemies who are not their friends.

If any of you have this world's good, and see his brother have need, and shut up his bowels against him, how dwelleth the love of God in that man? 1 *John* iii. 17. God has not left it at the liberty of the rich whether they will administer to the poor or not, but has as much obliged them to charity towards them as to justice towards one another. And it is not to be doubted but that the poor have as good a right to some part of our estates, as we have to the rest; not to take it by theft, but to ask it of charity. And, for aught I know, this may be one principal reason of that saying of our Saviour's, (call it prophesy or promise,) *The poor ye have always with you*, that there may be an opportunity for the exercising of charity, and that they who have mammon may not want a way of doing good with it, and making themselves friends of it. If it be so, that the first worldly blessing is to be rich, I think the next is that there are poor about us, to share our riches.

The noblest use that can be made of riches is to give them away, (according to that golden sentence that it seems our Saviour was often wont to use, *Beatius est dare quam accipere*,) [It is more blessed to give than to receive;] and I am sure the most proper objects of giving are those who have little or nothing of their own.

But who can persuade the mammonists of this world that this is good divinity? Alas, how few live and act as if they believed it! Oh wretched

and barbarous guardians, who, instead of putting clothes on the skin, pull off the skin from the flesh; and live in all manner of pleasure and wantonness, spending profusely on their lusts of playfulness, intemperance, or uncleanness; and in the mean time exact the money of their poor tenants, whereby these provisions may be made for the flesh.

How dwells the love of God in that man, whose hounds and horses, and it may be mistresses too, are fat and fair liking, and in the mean time his poor industrious tenants and their children, so nearly related to their landlord, are almost ready to perish for want of bread. The poor in general, as men, are nearer related to us by the law of nature, than dogs and horses; as Christians, they are still nearer akin to us; and as tenants, seem to be related to their landlords in a political capacity, and to be, as it were, of their family. For who can think otherwise, but that God, in distributing the kingdoms and lordships of the earth, intended that kings should take all their subjects to be their children, as to paternal care, and landlords should esteem their tenants as their ward, and constituent members of their family. In the distribution of the holy land, God gave no lot to Levi, whom yet he loved as well as any of the rest, intending that the Levites should be maintained at the charge of the respective tribes among whom they resided. It is partly thus in the distribution of the world; where God could easily have made provision of land for every man, and have made all the inhabitants of the earth freeholders; but he has

passed by one tribe, even all the poor of the earth, on purpose, as it seems, to employ the care and charity, and pity of their brethren about them. It is a reasonable maxim in law, *Cujus est lucrum, ejus est damnum*,—That he who receives the gains, should bear the loss; according to the custom of the holy commonwealth, that he who bought the land should also charge himself with the widow, and be content to have Ruth for his wife. So should every man who inherits or purchases a lordship, consider with what stock or poor tenants it is charged, and take care that by some honest means or other they be maintained.

But how dwells the love of God in those landlords, who, never considering the charge that God has laid on them, nor the relation wherein their tenants stand to them, exact the utmost worth of the land, by their good wills allowing nothing for the labour and pains of the tenants, nor for their hazards nor losses neither. It is a prerogative competible to God only, to do what he will with his own. For all men are stewards, and ought to eye the will of God more than their own wills. It is true indeed, that every landlord may, yea, and ought to make the best of his own; but then it must be considered in what sense his lands are his own; (sure I am they are so his own, that he must give an account of the management of them to a higher Landlord;) and it must be considered what it is to make the best of one's own. He makes the best of his estate, not who improves it and racks it to the utmost penny; not he who studiously adds land to land and lordship to lordship; not he who lays up

goods and monies for many years; but he who puts his estate to the best use, and improves it to the best ends; who does most glorify God with his substance; who loves to give rather than to receive. Go now, gentlemen, and in God's name make the best of your own.

And how dwells the love of God in those landlords, who, purchasing or inheriting open lordships, (where from generation to generation many poor families, partly by their labour, and partly by their right to commons, have lived comfortably,) do inclose them to their own proper use, without any just respect to the meaner sort, who have some small interest there, or any charitable respect to the poorest of all; and so drive those away from them, whom Christ has foretold they should always have with them. Job speaks somewhat rhetorically of the firstborn of the poor, whom he would have disdained to have set with the dogs of his flock; that is, he would not have them his shepherds. But these men, by a barbarous metamorphosis, turn the poor of the land into dogs of the flock, a shepherd and his dog supplying the place and employment of many families. It was a grievous complaint when they cried,

— *Jam seges est ubi Troja fuit,*

[Where Troy once flourished husbandmen may sow.]

The complaint is as just, though the poetry be not so good,

— *Jam canis est ubi seges erat,*

[Yet hounds now hunt, where crops were wont to grow.]

And how dwells the love of God in those landlords, who, when by their severe usage they have made their industrious tenants poor, or when some extraordinary hand of God hath touched them, and made them incapable of punctual payment, presently cry, "Let all that they have be sold, and payment made; or cast the insufficient tenant into prison, let him not come out thence till he have paid the utmost farthing; and let his wife and children seek their bread in desolate places, or starve the while." Good God, thou hast not dealt so with prodigal mankind, who have spent their primitive substance and stock in riotous living, and by their own fault reduced themselves to husks, but hast provided a ransom for them, and put a fresh stock into their hands to trade with. And what mercy can he expect, who shows no mercy to his fellow-servant? *He shall have judgment without mercy*, &c.

But on the other hand, as landlords do frequently offend through pride, luxury, covetousness, or cruelty; so the tenants, through idleness and knavery, do no less demonstrate themselves to be lovers of the world more than of God. It seems by the prophet Malachi, that God himself may be robbed. Sure I am, landlords are often defrauded; and many by the idleness and carelessness of their tenants in not paying their rents, or by the greediness and knavery of their tenants in impoverishing and dilapidating their lands and

houses, are very much wronged, and perhaps, by many such abuses, straitened and made less capable of paying their debts, keeping hospitality, or befriending their other industrious tenants who deserve well. For the poor to oppress the rich is not so usual, but it is as certain a symptom of a worldly mind, as for the rich to oppress the poor.

MEDITATION XXI.

Of tradesmen.

Some are of opinion concerning trades, as the apostle speaks concerning the law, 1 Tim. i. 8. *That they are all good, if a man use them lawfully;* which, for aught I know, (if it be meant of trades that are allowed by law, concerning which the law has annexed rules, and to which the law has annexed privileges,) is very true; but yet these two things must be confessed, That all trades are not alike safe and laudable; nor may every age and temper be committed to any trade indifferently.

Tradesmen are a very substantial and useful part of a nation; and their way of living seems preferable to the living of gentlemen or husbandmen, as requiring more industry than the former, and more ingenuity than the latter. The all-wise God doth instruct them to discretion. Bezaleel and Aholiab did receive the spirit of architecture from him, as well as Saul the spirit of government. But yet, as if they were not beholden to him, how great a part of them do prefer the world, that great anti-deity, before him. So do

all they who make the getting of wealth, and the raising of themselves, or their friends or children, to a singular and unwieldy greatness, the main and highest end of all their occupations; little or nothing respecting charity to the poor, or the good of the public.

And so do they, who, by making false or unserviceable wares, put a cheat on mankind, and elude the necessities of the world, instead of relieving them. What can be more directly a preferring of private gain before the public good?

And so do they, who, by lying or equivocating, by dark shops, or false weights or measures, or by a yea and nay simplicity, impose on the credulous or the ignorant; who seek to buy cheap by unjust disparagement, or sell dear by undue commendation.

So do they, who take apprentices, with promise to instruct them in their mystery, and on terms that may well challenge it, and yet through ignorance, or idleness, or jealousy, do not do it, or do it by halves; or else, through covetousness, employ them and spend their time in services and offices alien to their vocation; so that, at the end of seven years apprenticeship, instead of being skilful enough to set up a trade, they only understand how to dress a horse, or tend a child better than they did at first.

And indeed all those tradesmen are lovers of the world more than of God, who do not subordinate their trading to the glory of God, gain to honesty, and their private enriching to the public weal; who are more solicitous to secure and advance their worldly callings than *to make their*

calling and election sure; and take more pains to work out their fortunes than their salvation.

MEDITATION XXII.

Of inn-keepers.

I have no mind to consider the popular objections that are made against the very employment of taverners and inn-keepers. For although perhaps it is not proper to call it a trade, yet the employment seems to be ancient, and, as the world goes, is necessary, and rightly managed, may be honest enough. The example of Rahab, who seems to have kept an house of entertainment in Jericho, a long time ago, justifies the antiquity of this employment; though I confess the example of Rahab the harlot, does not add much credit to it. If any body be so witty, as to say the Hebrew word Zonah, and the Greek word πόρνη, do signify an hostess, as well as an harlot; I will not from thence infer, that an hostess and an harlot are *synonoma*, and that therefore every hostess is an harlot. Yet this confusion of the signification of words is apt to engender a foul suspicion in men, and therefore I think for their credit should not be much talked of. But if we allow the antiquity of this employment, I cannot see what considerable service it will do them; for it seems that harlotry, and many other bad things that I could name, are as old as it.

But be it ancient or new, it is now become necessary in several respects; though perhaps not

so necessary in some others, as the inn-keepers would have it, and many guests do make it. I say it is become necessary, as men are now. For in the primitive and purer ages of the world, the kind and hospitable temper of men seems to have superseded this employment, and to have well supplied the want of it. It is not likely, may some think, there were any inn-keepers on the road, when Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, travelled from one nation and kingdom to another, and no man wronged them, *Ps.* cv. 14. Nor any public house in Gibeon, a great city of Benjamin, when the Levite and his concubine had like to have lain in the streets for want of lodging. But yet there might be for all that; and for aught I know, those properly hired inns where Jacob's sons lodged, when they were fain to go as far as Egypt to market; and Moses, when he travelled to be their deliverer out of the same Egypt. But be this matter as it will; however kind and hospitable the first ages of the world may be supposed to have been, and these last ages are commanded to be, *Heb.* xiii. 2. we find it necessary now, to as many as go abroad, and cannot carry their houses and provisions along with them, that there be appointed places of entertainment, where they may buy the things which otherwise they must want; and hire lodging, or else lie out of doors.

'I confess I do not well know, what, in the sense of this law, is called a laudable vocation; but I doubt not but that this employment, abstracted from all the ill manners of men that have corrupted it, is, in in its own nature, warrantable and

honest. The lusts of men have mingled themselves with the best and purest employments on earth, no wonder then if they have brought a blame on this. The blame indeed is more general in this than in others, but yet it is to be hoped not universal neither. For if we except these that follow, and such like, for lovers of the world more than of God, the rest may pass for current Christians. I mean,

Such as are inn-keepers out of covetousness, who have other estates, or convenient ways to maintain themselves and their families comfortably, and yet will adventure to live in an employment so full of snares and temptations to sins, both of omission and commission. This seems to conclude a greater zeal for earth, than heaven.

Such as are inn-keepers out of luxury and intemperance; not so much to accommodate the necessities of other men, as to pamper their own lusts; who live in that way, merely because they have made it their element, and must be inn-keepers, to keep themselves out of inns. These make not provisions for the necessities of nature, but for the flesh, to fulfil it in the lusts thereof.

Such as are inn-keepers out of mere idleness; preferring a life of temptations and snares, before a life of pains and labour; venturing their salvation, to save their bones.

Such as over-value their wares, and observe no just proportion between the worth of the thing, and their own gain; who care not how much they get for how little.

Such as over-reckon their guests, demanding money of them for that which they never had, only because they think that they cannot tell but that they had it.

Such as draw in and inveigle men to spend their money, preferring their own gain before their neighbour's time, or business, or family; or if they do not draw them in, yet draw them on, by one wile or other, to spend more money, or consume more time than they ought or would. Is this to love one's neighbour as one's self?

Such as care not to what excess or intemperance they serve their guests, but will either put their bottle to their noses, or will never with-hold it though they have drunk ever so long, or so largely, while they see the shot will be paid; that add fuel, when they see that men are already on fire.

Who make no difference between day and night, nor between one day and another.

Such as either seek to please their guests by profane and filthy speaking, or are afraid to displease them by offering any restraint or reproof. To sit still, and be content to see God's good creatures abused, and man, the best of them, abusing himself, and turning himself into a block or a beast; to be content to hear God's holy name profaned and blasphemed without reproof or regret; and all this to make up a reckoning, will make up a bad reckoning at the last.

Such hosts as will find men, women into the bargain, if they will but pay well for their drink.

Such hostesses as set themselves to sale, together with their liquors; or by their wanton behaviours inveigle the silly to mispend their time or money.

Such as cheat the king or his commissioners of what they ought to pay for, by the same law whereby they enjoy any thing.

In a word, all such victuallers, inn-keepers, ale-house-keepers, who prefer gain before godliness, worldy advantage before the public peace, or the peace of their consciences; who will expose the health of their bodies, the salvation of their souls, the order of their families, to live idly, gainfully, luxuriously, are predominant lovers of world, and the love of the Father is not in them. Go now, landlords and landladies, and comfort yourselves in the antiquity, necessity and lawfulness of your employment.

MEDITATION XXIII.

Of beggars.

At the first naming of this sort of people, it will be expected by some, that I should give them all a pass, and pack them away to their own place. But I am not certain that one and the same place is assigned to them all, and therefore it is best to consider awhile of them.

I think there is a text somewhere speaking to this purpose, as if it forbade any beggar to be in Israel. And I do well remember there is another, that foretels that the poor shall never cease

out of the land. I think they may well be reconciled. There shall always be persons so poor as to need to be provided for, and yet there ought to be such provisions made for them that they shall not beg; so that it is rather the sin of the rich than of the poor, that there are any beggars. There seems to be an express law to preserve people from begging; but I know no law or reason that forbids people to beg who cannot otherwise live.

I know no promise that secures a righteous man from being reduced to a state of beggary, and indeed no substantial reason that will defend him; he may as well beg as be banished, diseased, martyred. But what shall we say to the psalmist, who tells us, *He never saw the seed of the righteous begging their bread*, Ps. xxxvii. 25.

I remember I once urged this text to a beggar woman at my own door, finding her to discourse understandingly and Christianly, and to pretend to religion; who, premising a sigh, answered me very readily, "True, sir, the plalmist does say so; but yet we know there was a time when he himself was forced to beg his bread;" and thereon quoted the history of David's begging the shew-bread of Abimelech.

This answer I laid to heart, and it made me kind to her at that time, and to think more charitably of that whole tribe of mankind ever since. For it is not only true that David begged his bread at that time, but it seems, as far as I can compute, that some years of his life were led in a more genteel kind of beggary. And I find those divines who urge the promises of the law

to preserve the righteous from beggary, and will have David's experience in this psalm to be accommodated to all ages, are yet fain to come off and tell us, "That all these temporal promises are to be understood, *cum exceptione castigationis et crucis*, saving to God the prerogative of correcting and chastening his people, how and when he pleases." For whatever David saw in his days, the apostle tells us of many in other days, *of whom the world was not worthy*, who were yet treated as if they were not worthy to live in the world. And we see them in our days reduced to a necessity of living on their neighbours, and asking relief too. That these are poor, may not be their own fault, but their Maker's pleasure. That they ask relief, is the fault of others, who will not relieve them without asking. And as for the formality of begging, which seems to be most shameful, and of worst report, I do not see but that it is possible for a good man to be reduced to this also. The blind and the lame who begged by the way-side, and at the gate of the temple, had some of them so much faith as to be healed. And if we could take a view of the inhabitants of Abraham's bosom, among the rest, we should find poor Lazarus as formal a beggar as could be imagined, translated thither from the rich man's gates. How would such a sight make us wonder and say, with them in the text. *Is not this he who sat at the way-side, and lay at the gates begging?*

The wisest of men tells us, Eccl. ix. 11. *That wise men sometimes want bread, and men of understanding are sometimes poor.*

It is accounted a shame for men to beg, but I think it is a greater shame to suffer them; and this shame lights either on the rich who do not relieve them, or the magistrates who do not restrain them, if they are relieved. The law of England has provided for all sorts of poor, either to employ the able or to relieve the impotent; and yet, to the shame of the executioners of the laws, we see that the hedges and highways are not compelled to keep in.

It is certainly a great reproach to the Christian world, and especially to our nation, that there are any itinerant and errant beggars found among us.

All which will not excuse the able who can work, nor the impotent who are by law provided for in any tolerable manner, from being akin to him whose character it is, that he compasses the world about, and, like an idle busy-body, continually walks to and fro therein.

Much less will it excuse that graceless generation, the worst of mankind, who beget children only to lay them at other men's doors; I mean, who take no care to educate their children in any commendable way of living, nor put them to any good work or business; but as soon as they are a little reared, as if they were heirs of the universe, send them forth to seek their fortunes, and to lay hold on that which comes next to them, as if it were their own.

MEDITATION XXIV.

Of wagerers.

In this licentious age, wherein men generally act hand-over-hand, and live *ex-tempore*, not troubling their consciences with any cases, nor reducing their actions to any considerations, the practice of laying wagers is grown very familiar to almost all sorts of men. I will not absolutely, without exception, condemn every wager whatever. For some are so small, and the winning or losing of them is of so little regard, the persons who lay them are so unconcerned, and free from fear or covetousness, and the end of them so innocent, as to determine some little doubtful truth, or to give a little life and vigour to some honest harmless achievement, and perhaps it is so seldom too, that there seems to be no danger arising therefrom.

But without controversy, the common and customary practice of wagering is very unjustifiable, and ought, with the rest of the symptoms of a worldly mind, to be exploded.

Such a symptom I take all wagering to be, that proceeds from a covetous desire of getting that which is another man's, or is accompanied with a vexatious fear of losing our own. For covetousness and distracting carefulness are ever bad, and that cannot be very good that is the proper, direct, efficient cause of them. If it be said, that in so saying, I condemn all wagers without exception, even the smallest, as being all at-

tended with some degree or other of covetousness, I think it is very falsely objected; for I know some men, now and then, lay some small wager, which they are very indifferent whether they win or lose, nay, which they had rather lose than win.

Such a symptom are all such wagers as are laid for the abetting and encouraging of scandalous or suspicious actions or sports. For if it be unseemly, and of ill report to men to run races naked, or women next to it; to abet the same by wagers, cannot be safe or seemly.

And such a symptom are all such wagers as impoverish or weaken him who lays them, if he lose, or his adversary if he win. It is a very uncomfortable way of coming to poverty, by losing great wagers; and indeed it is a sorry, paltry way of getting riches, to get them by winning. Abraham scorned a far more genteel way of enriching himself than this, by the spoil of his conquered enemies, that it might not be said, that the king of Sodom had made Abraham rich.

And such a symptom are all such bold wagers that are laid concerning events that are purely in the hand of God, no room being left for second causes to interpose, and make a human probability or improbability. This looks like a profane piece of presumption. For how can mortal man intermeddle with the counsels of the great God, to stint, limit, engage or excuse them, and be innocent? But I have known wagers also laid merely instead of arguments, when men have had nothing to say in defence of their cause; and others laid concerning things which can never be

proved or determined. And oftentimes they who are so forward to lay wagers, will not venture to pitch on a certain judge who may determine whether they win or lose. These also are symptoms like the former, only somewhat worse. For besides the impiety and impertinency, they argue a great degree of shameful folly.

MEDITATION XXV.

Of Gamesters.

I THINK it is generally concluded, that exercise is expedient, and indeed necessary for the health of the body. Physicians contend for the agreeableness of some recreations in particular to some constitutions, and so they allot ringing to some, shooting to others, hunting to others, and bowling to others. I had rather believe these artists than dispute with them; though it seems that the end of all these recreations may be attained as well by riding or walking. I shall esteem him a wise and temperate man, who is induced to these recreations by no other consideration but that of health. But I fear there are few such.

Recreations are also said to be needful to the relief of the mind, which I will not deny. And yet, so far as I can apprehend, the variety of business is the best recreation, and does as effectually relieve the mind as any sports whatever. For my own part, I would desire no better recreation of mind than to go from one business to another, that should be within my call and com-

pass; and then seasonably to lay down both the one and the other on my pillow. But whatever may be said in vindication of some sports, there are certainly many others which cannot be justified; yea, and the gamesters will be found lovers of the world more than of the Father.

Such gamesters are they, who follow sports in their own nature unlawful, being against the rules of justice, temperance, or modesty.

And such are they who follow sports in themselves lawful, unlawfully; that is, unrighteously, intemperately, or unseasonably. I reckon that they follow sports unrighteously, who make a calling of gaming, and recreation their business, thereby endeavouring to get other men's estates, or venturing to lose their own. The nature of commutative justice requires, that when I receive that which is another man's, I part with something of my own which is equivalent, and bears some due proportion to it. Hereby the gains of wagers and gaming comes to be ranked among other filthy lucre, and may be matched with the price of a dog, or the hire of a harlot.

And here, by the way, I cannot but stop a little, and complain of the carelessness and cruelty of those parents and masters, who instruct, or encourage, or so much as allow their children, servants or scholars, to play for money. Is not covetousness a sufficient blemish to our old age, but we must be inured to it in our youth? Is it not cruelty to instruct children to cheat and wrong one another, before they be in a capacity to make restitution? Is the love of money the root of all evil, and yet we take so much care to

plant it, and that in the minds of those whom we pretend to preserve from evil? It cannot easily be computed how much idle, covetous, contentious, cozening conversation is ushered into the world by this kind of education; nor how many mischievous consequences there are of it. Oh that all who pretend to love the Father, would diligently watch against the introduction of the love of the world into the hearts of their children by this means!

But besides those gamesters who unrighteously get or spend estates by gaming, there are others, *lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God*, who spend their time excessively in sports, pleasurably passing away their time, which, without pastimes, hastens away apace; and which, when it is past, cannot be called back, though one would give all the substance of his house to retrieve it. I know it is unjust to determine the same measure of time for sports to all men; and I think it is unsafe to determine an exact measure to any man. But every man's own conscience, if he examine it, can tell him whether he be a lover of pleasure more than of God; whether he lives in pleasure; whether he spends his time, either more largely or more gladly, in sports, or in devotion, or in good business, or which he delights in most. It seems the philosopher speaks in anger, who says, *Indignus est humano nomine qui vel unum diem velit esse in voluptibus*, That he does not deserve the name of a man who is content to spend one day in pleasures. But if he was in earnest, as he seems to have been, I think it is highly reasonable that

the professors of Christianity should be as serious and abstemious as any heathen philosopher of them all; and rather reduce the *unum diem*, [one day,] into *unam horam*, [one hour,] than enlarge their liberty. I wonder exceedingly what most of our gentlemen, and many of our scholars, think of themselves, (if ever they think of themselves,) and what opinion they have of their own temper and inclination; who, from week to week, spend more than a moiety of their days in sports and recreations, in needless visits, impertinent conversations, and either in doing ill or doing nothing, or doing that which is nothing to their purpose, nothing serving to their general or special calling. They cannot imagine, surely, that by saying a prayer, or reading a chapter in the morning, they have purchased all the rest of the day to their own use; as the Jews got the remainder of the fields, and of the flocks, by offering up the first fruits, and the first born; or that by beginning in the spirit, they have obtained a licence to go on, and end in the flesh. One would think that a Christian preacher should make as much conscience of his time as a heathen painter, and allow *Nulla dies sine linea*, No day without a line, to be a good motto. It is certainly a weak argument, that because men have good estates, and need not work nor trade to maintain themselves, that therefore God requires no business at all of them, but that their time is their own. And as for those who are in a clerical capacity, methinks the children of this world, (who act at a more industrious rate,) should shame the children of light, or the lights of the world, (let them call themselves by what

name they please,) out of that silly fancy, that because they have got a little learning they need study no more; or because they can make a sermon in one day in the week, and preach it on another, that therefore the other five are their own to play with.

Among the worldly gamesters, the unseasonable make up as great a number, as the unrighteous or intemperate. I reckon those unseasonable gamesters, who purloin from the Lord's day, to bestow in sports and recreations. I will not enter into the controversy about the morality of the Sabbath, nor the certain right of succession that the Lord's day hath to the holy rest of the Seventh day; but I do believe that the conscience of a good man is the best casuist in this matter. And that every such man in the world doth think it reasonable to appropriate some certain time to the more immediate and solemn worship of God; and that no such man will grudge a seventh part of his time to so good a Master, who gives him all the rest; and that there are many such men, who are so far from grudging God one day in a week, that they had rather every day in the week, and every weak in the year, and every year of their lives, could be directly spent in the service of that God to whom they owe all they have, and in communion with whom, (and therein I place the true celebration of a Sabbath,) their true and proper happiness doth consist. And I am of opinion, with Mr. Hales, and many other good men, that "religion doth prosper or decay in church, family, or single soul, proportion-

ably as the Christian Sabbath is observed or neglected."

It seems that there are some pleasures allowed us in general, which are therefore called *our own*, Isa. lviii. 13. which yet we are required to refrain from on God's holy day. And I see no reason he has to complain for want of recreation on the Sabbath, to whom the Sabbath itself is the greatest recreation; which I pray God it may be to all who pretend to a predominant love of the Father.

As for those conscientious sensualists, who use sports on the Lord's day to prove that they are no Jews; the end may be good, possibly, but the method that they take, will, I doubt, indifferently serve to prove, that they are no good Christians neither.

Besides these, there are other worldly gamesters who indulge themselves in sports and pleasures, in a time of public calamity or danger; whom the prophet Amos describes, (*Amos*, vi. 1—6.) and God threatens above all sorts of men that I read of, except those who blaspheme the Holy Ghost, saying, *That their iniquity shall not be purged from them till they die*, Isa. xxii. 14. in short, it is the character of true Israelites, that they cannot make merry when Jerusalem is oppressed, *Psal.* cxxxvii. and by the rule of contraries, it is a symptom of a sensualist to nourish himself in a day of slaughter.

MEDITATION XXVI.

Of debtors.

Sin is properly a debt; but to be in debt, is not properly a sin. If it were, what consolation could be administered to them who were born in debt, and continue therein sore against their wills; to them who are engaged therein merely by the providence of God, or reduced thereunto by the injustice or oppression of men? But yet to be much in debt, and that inextricably, is a very great calamity, and especially burdensome to a just and ingenuous mind; and yet more especially, if contracted by any fault or folly of his own. For if to lose estates, and lay down life itself on a public or charitable account, be accounted generous and virtuous; to run into debt on such account, ought not surely to be esteemed scandalous.

Solomon somewhere tells us, *That the borrower is servant to the lender.* And indeed if there were no more in it, but this loss of liberty, it would make that condition troublesome and uneasy. But, alas, it is attended with many other mischiefs and dangers, which still enhance the calamity. The precept therefore, *of owing no man any thing*, Rom. xiii. 8. is given us in much mercy, and God does therein consult our ease, safety and quiet; as by commanding us to be chaste and temperate, and righteous, he does consult our health and credit. There are two commands in the text, *To owe no man any thing, and to love*

all men always. The former seems a very hard commandment to the poor, and it is almost impossible for them to perform it. (*Juvet idem qui jubet!*) [Oh that he who commanded it would help!] The latter is seldom, I doubt, performed by the rich; whose riches, for the most part, make them proud, disdainful, oppressive and covetous. The performance of the former seems to depend on the performance of the latter. For how is it possible that the poor should be out of debt, if the rich be not kind and charitable? But if all men did love their neighbours as themselves, then it were easy to conceive that no man need owe any thing to any. What then, does God command men to do impossibilities? Does he withhold straw, and yet command his servants to make brick? Does he send men naked into the world, and leave them destitute of all things, even of strength itself, and yet charge them neither to beg nor borrow, but to starve? No, this cannot be. We must therefore relax the seeming severity of this command, by some favourable interpretation, and say, we must not wilfully and needlessly contract debts, nor carelessly and unjustly continue in them. It is neither true nor charitable arguing, to conclude, that any man is unjust, because he is insufficient; no more than it was in the Egyptian tyrant, who concluded the poor people were idle, because they did not give in the wonted tale of bricks, when the straw was denied them. As there may be great charity, where there is but a mite, or possibly nothing at all given; so there may be true righteousness, where nothing is paid. And it becomes us to

imitate the gracious nature of God, who accepteth men for charitable, *In whom he findeth a willing mind, according to what they have, and not according to what they have not*, 2 Cor. viii. 12. And for righteous, according to what they can do, and not according to what they cannot. The consideration of the great debt, which we all, even the most solvent of the sons of men, owe to the Almighty God, should make us favourable both in punishing and censuring those who are indebted to us; and our short-sightedness and fallibility should make us take heed we do not prove ourselves uncharitable, whilst we so liberally condemn other people for unrighteous.

But yet there is a contracting of, and continuing in debt, which is very unrighteous, and a symptom of a worldly mind. Such is that, when men by riotous, idle or extravagant living, spend their own estates, and reduce themselves to a necessity of being beholden to other men's. If it be unskilfulness, unadvisedness, weakness or oversight, it is uneasy to be borne, and somewhat shameful to be imputed. But I dare not say it is wicked, because I do not know that any man is bound in conscience to be unsurprizably and indefeatably cunning in the management of any secular affairs, no, though his education have been in it.

Such is that, when men see the languishing of their trades or estates, and that they are no longer able to bear the weight of their expenses, and yet will rather choose to supply those expenses out of other men's estates, than they will retrench them. Nay, for aught I know, charity

itself (commonly so called) may be to blame here; for paying to another man what is his, ought to take place of giving away one's own.

Such is that, much more, when men make other men's estates maintain their lusts, their unnecessary pomp and grandeur of living, their unwieldly purchases or portions, or any thing superfluous.

Such is that, when men either unnecessarily delay to pay their debts, if they be demanded; or do not make satisfaction to their ability for any loss really sustained, if it be required by the creditor, which, according to the reverend bishop Juel*, is the only allowable interest.

Such is that, when men cast about, and seek ways to defeat the creditor; or will so much as make use of any trick or nicety in law, to avoid the payment of a just and honest debt. Nay, such is that, when men could wish with themselves, that they could by any plausible means defeat him. Nay, if they do not with as much cheerfulness, if their circumstances do capacitate them, pay what they have borrowed, as they borrowed what they needed, they cannot escape the blemish of covetousness, injustice, or a predominant love of the world.

MEDITATION XXVII.

Of creditors.

It hath pleased the wise Governor of the world so to order it that no one man in the world

* (His name is generally spelt *Jewel* now, although it be *Juellus* in Latin. It is spelt *Jewel*, p. 332, Shaw.)

should be furnished with all things; but that all men should, in some thing or other, some time or other, stand in need of the assistance of their neighbours. The greatest kings are sometimes forced to borrow auxiliaries, and the wisest to ask counsel of their friends. God will not have the head to say, so much as to the feet, *I have no need of you.* Whether it be by a sense of their own insufficiency, to maintain humility in every man, or by a sense of the necessities of mankind, to exercise charity and benevolence in all men, I know not; but so it is, that all the members of the creation, as well as of the body, mutually need the help of one another. And I doubt not but that it is a moral duty for all men to be ready to lend their assistance, to serve a good end, as far as their capacity will permit. For so commanded Love itself; *From him that will borrow of thee, turn thou not away.* There are many people of this middle-size in the world, who are not so rich as to give away; but yet they are well able to lend, at least small sums, for a small time. This to do, I reckon, is a great piece of charity, and the most considerable method, that a mean and inconsiderable man can use. It is almost like the miraculous feeding of thousands with a few loaves, which was our Saviour's charity, where the stock was laid out, and yet was not lost, nor so much as diminished. Money can do that without a miracle successively, which these loaves of his by a miracle performed at once. Now I believe if men were pursuaded that they should take up so many baskets full, and that their money should be multiplied as our Saviour's bread

was, they would try to work wonders with their money too. And I pray, who knows but that the merciful God, who loves mercy, may, by a special blessing of his own, increase money so laid out, and will requite those who lend to him; *For there is that scattereth, and yet increaseth.* I do not think it was one of the same fishes wherewith he fed the multitude, that afterwards returned to give him thanks, or make requital; but we know that he who only gave fish with a little bread to it, received fish again with money in the mouth of it. But suppose it should not please God to make any such advantageous restitution, the lender has no cause to complain; for besides his principal, he has this interest of having done good and relieved the necessity of his poor brethren. If I lend an hundred pounds, and at the year's end receive back my principal, and get some six pound debt of my own discharged into the bargain, do not I properly receive six per cent. for my money? When I lend to the poor, I pay part of a debt to them, and there is my interest.

Well, lending is a great piece of charity, plainly commanded, and highly commended in the holy Book. And I doubt not, but that there are many in the world now living, who, if they were called, would come out and say, it has been their greatest relief, and that they had begged, if it had not been for borrowing. In some respect it is an higher act of charity, than giving.

But yet there are a sort of creditors, who even in lending, do declare themselves to be lovers of the world, and not of the Father. So do they who lend out of pride and vain-glory, rather to

exhibit their own fulness, than relieve their brother's wants; as the Persian monarch feasted his subjects, *Esth.* i. 4. not out of charity to them, but to show the riches of his kingdom.

So do they who lend out of malice, to have an opportunity to reproach the debtor, or insult over him; like the counsel that Shemaiah seemed charitably to give Nehemiah, to secure himself in the temple; the design of which was not indeed the good and safety of that prince, but that the enemy might bring up an evil report against him, and reproach him. Or if afterwards they make it a matter of reproach, it comes all to one. Or if they make it a common pleasant table-talk to others, it swerves wonderfully from the command of our holy Law-giver, who charges us to be reserved in all our acts of charity, that the left hand, as near as it is, should not know what the right hand doeth.

So do they, who lend out of carnal cunning; the more easily to wind themselves into the estates of other men, and to get a footing there, from whence they are resolved, if possible, never to be removed. This is like the wickedness of Saul to David, giving him his daughter to wife, only that she might be a snare to him, 1 *Sam.* xviii. 21. and that he might be decoyed to his ruin. Whether the psalmist alluded to this kind of policy among the Jews, or not, I know not; but this phrase fits it very well, Psal. cix. 11. *Let the extortioner catch all that he hath.*

And so do they who lend out of covetousness, not out of any charitable design to relieve others, but out of a covetous design to enrich them-

selves. They do indeed accidentally feed others, but the main intention is to multiply their own loaves. Whoever predominantly seeks himself, or his own private gain, in giving or lending, depraves the sacred nature of charity, whose lovely character it is, that she *seeketh not her own*, 1 Cor. xiii. 5. Yea, so tender is the delicate constitution of this grace, that it is violated by an evil eye, by hankerings, and expectations, and respect to reward, where no bonds nor covenant do intervene. Read the story of Balaam, and you would think he was a man very free from covetousness, who would not go without express leave; and when he was come to Balak, would not take any bribe or reward of him at all. And yet, where man can see nothing, God can behold faults; for under all this seeming contempt of the world, the Searcher of hearts charges him, *That his way was perverse before him.* And again, in Jude, ver. 11. *He ran greedily for reward.* And this now brings me to consider of that notorious sort of lenders, called usurers, concerning whom I must necessarily enlarge my meditation.

MEDITATION XXVIII.

Of usurers.

I HAVE often said, when I have been consulted, that I was not so well satisfied with the lawfulness of usury,* as to practise it; nor yet dare I

* The general term *usury*, in its original sense, signifies money paid for the use of money.

Usury, as a legal term, signifies the sum taken for the

absolutely condemn it, without any limitation, in all those who at any time venture on it. It has of late years (for I never heard any man plead for it out of antiquity) crept into the conversation and judgment too; (and I fear out of the former into the latter; for men usually set themselves to justify what they do, and love to do;) of so many reverend divines and professors of religion, otherwise not scandalous, that mere modesty, I think, keeps many men from meddling against *it*, lest they should appear to meddle against *them*, and condemn a just generation. But yet it lies so fully in my way, and there being a necessity that I must either step over it or remove it, I will prefer the interest of truth, before the authority and friendship of men; lest while I condemn the predominant lovers of the world, I should betray myself to be one. Not that it lies on my hands to state and determine the controversy about usury, but to show that usurers are lovers of the world more than of the Father. If all should happen to be found such, it is their fault, and not mine; and, possibly, by the bles sing of God, the discovery may tend to the cure.

Controversy about usury, did I call it? And, indeed, I cannot but wonder what has made it a controversy. I doubt we must give the same account of the origin of the controversy, as the apostle James does of wars and fightings in general, that *it comes from the lusts of men.* The

use of money, when that sum exceeds the rate established by law. Or,

Usury is an unlawful contract on the loan of money, to receive the same again, with exorbitant interest.

want of conscience makes the case of conscience. For God and his whole church seem to have stated this matter as fully and plainly as any other thing whatever, and I cannot find that till within these hundred years, or thereabouts, any body appeared openly in defence of it, or dared go about to oppose the authority of God and men, of Scriptures, councils, and fathers in this matter. So that although usury be a very old sin, yet the defence of it seems to be a very new one. Usury is chiefly condemned by authorities, and chiefly defended by arguments. I will chiefly insist therefore on those two heads, and then, in the last place, which is properly my business, determine the worldly usurer.

I know there are many arguments brought by philosophers, politicians and divines against usury. But I do not see that there is any need of the weak props of human reason to support divine authority. When God speaks, he speaks reason, whether we comprehend it or not. To his authority, therefore, I betake myself, as reckoning that I need no more, though much more might be had. The command in Exod. xxii. 25. and Lev. xxv. 37. is very plain and peremptory; *If thou lend money to any of my people who is poor by thee, thou shalt not be to him as an usurer, neither shalt thou lay on him usury. If thy brother be waxen poor thou shalt relieve him. Take no usury of him, or increase, but fear thy God, that thy brother may live with thee. Thou shalt not give him thy money on usury, nor lend him thy victuals for increase.* Afterwards, when the Lawgiver comes to repeat this law, he explains it,

and enforces it, Deut. xxiii. 19, 20. *Thou shalt not lend on usury to thy brother, usury of money, usury of victuals, usury of any thing that is lent on usury; unto a stranger thou mayest lend on usury, but unto thy brother thou shalt not lend on usury.* This repetition of the law differs something from the former, but whether it be in favor of usury or not, I shall see, when I come to consider the arguments brought in defence of usury. Now let any man cast his eye on the fifth chapter of Nehemiah, and consider in what a studious and fervent manner that pious and charitable governor goes about to reform this oppression, that was crept in among the covetous nobles and rulers of his time. He was very angry when he heard the complaint of the poor against the usurers. He enters into serious consideration with himself, and calls a counsel in his own generous breast, how he may redress this grievance. He rebuked them; that, I suppose, might be privately. But when that did not avail, his zeal did so transport him, that one would almost suspect it was beyond discretion; he stirs up the multitude against them; he argues the case with them; he presses it on their consciences from two or three weighty considerations; and at last condescends to entreaty, *I pray you let us leave off this usury.* And yet all the usury of money that they were guilty of, was but the hundredth part, ver. 11. How zealous may we suppose this good governor would have been against the twentieth part, which is esteemed kind usage in these days. When David describes the man whom God will accept, he requires that he be a man *who puts*

not out his money to usury, Ps. xv. 5. And when the prophet Ezekiel describes a man whom God will forever reject, he describes him *by giving forth on usury, and taking increase*, Ezek. xviii. 13. And again, describing a people whom God will judge, he describes them *by their taking usury and increase*, Ezek. xxii. 12. Where, by the by, we may do well to take notice of one of the most angry phrases that I think do occur in all the Scriptures, ver. 13. *Behold therefore I have smitten my hands at thy dishonest gain.*

These commands are very plain and express, one would think, these promises very great and precious, and these threatenings very dreadful. He had need of the reason of an angel certainly, who shall go about to evade *the sure word of prophecy.* And yet how plainly soever these things are delivered, there is this further to be observed in the delivery of them, that both in that twenty-fifth of Leviticus, and fifth of Nehemiah, the *taking of usury*, and the *not fearing of God*, are phrases of the same import, and it is as much in plain English as to say, He who takes usury has not the fear of God before his eyes.

O fearful character! Is there any man in the world who would in cold blood be content that this should be predicated of him? A like observation is to be made from both those texts in Ezekiel. How light a matter soever this licentious and wanton age makes of usury, scarce assigning it a place among the venial sins, and poor peccadillos of life, this inspired prophet ranks it with, and for aught I can perceive, makes it equal

in complexion and stature, to dishonouring of parents, oppression, profaneness, Sabbath-breaking, whoredom, incest, murder and idolatry. If I had ever so good an opinion of the lawfulness and innocence of usury, and were able to discourse ever so learnedly and rationally in the defence of it, yet I profess this black regiment of comrades that go along with it, in a list of God's own drawing up, would scare me from owning it, or taking acquaintance to it, *Me comitum vestigia terrent*, [the footsteps of its companions terrify me.] It is a pretty strange expression of the prophet Jeremiah, Jer. xv. 10. *Wo is me, my mother*, &c. *I have neither lent on usury*, &c. *yet all the people curse me.* I have somewhere read a paraphrase on these words to this purpose. "If I had been an usurer indeed, or some such notorious pest to mankind, it had been no wonder that every man's hand should have been stretched out, and every man's mouth opened against me. But this is my astonishment, that I am no such person, yet they curse me; they use me no better, than though I were the vilest of men." I hope for my friends' sake, that this private interpretation of the words is severe, (though a learned doctor of our own adheres to it,) and do much rather embrace the sense that the learned Glassius gives of them, who acknowledges a *Synecdoche speciei*, [one thing of a class or species put for the whole,] in the words, and so paraphrase them thus, "I have had no dealing in the world, which usually is cause of falling out, yet the people curse me." I have somewhere read it pleaded on the behalf of usury, that it is no where condemned by name

in the New Testament. Suppose this to be true, methinks it is but a small consolation, and should yield but a small encouragement to the usurer. The Holy Bible is divided into four parts, Moses, and the Prophets, and the book of Psalms, and the New Testament. May we think it safe to do a thing forbidden in three of these, because it is not spoken of in the fourth? I think I may say concerning the usurers that plead this, as our Saviour concerning the surviving brethren of the Gospel glutton, *If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither would they hear, though the Gospel should speak the same thing.*

And what, are false weights and measures too become lawful under the silent Gospel, though so thundered against by the law and prophets? Has the silence of the Gospel given a toleration to perjury, blasphemy, and false-witness-bearing too? If it be said, that these things are forbidden in the Gospel, under the general name of injustice and unrighteousness; it may be retorted, that usury also is condemned under uncharitableness and oppression. I remember bishop Jewel grounds his severe discourse against it, on 1 *Thess.* iv. 6. But what though the word should not be there, and that it should not be forbidden by the plain, hateful name of usury; if the same thing be forbidden and reproved by some other phrase, is it not as bad for the usurer?

And what else can be forbidden by the phrase, of not hoping for any thing again from what we lend; which occurs in Luke vi. 35. *Lend, hoping for nothing again.* This cannot well be interpreted of not expecting so much as the principal

again, for that would make the charity to be giving, and not lending; and that Christ had spoken of, ver. 30. And yet there must needs be some sense in the words, being the words of one who spoke nothing in vain. It can be no less than this, then, that we must expect nothing over and above, nothing resulting from the kindness, and this the composition of the verb with the preposition ἀπὸ, will fairly allow, if not enforce, in the judgment of any good grammarian. I am not ignorant, that the verb ἀπελπίζω, is said to be used sometimes to signify despairing. Neither am I ignorant, that there is nothing spoken in words so plain and easy, but that the wit and learning of men, especially when it is called in to aid their worldly interest, may perplex and pervert it. But it is a great satisfaction to me to consider, that all the translators of the Gospel into all languages that I understand, do translate the word, by *hoping for nothing again, or from thence;* and not one of them that I know of, by *despairing nothing.* And those translators are supposed to be of the most learned persons in every nation, as every body know they were in our own. But for once, to gratify these critics, I will see what sense can be made of the 33d, 34th, 35th verses put together, if we translate μηδὲν ἀπελπίζοντες, *despairing nothing*, or, *not despairing.* Our Saviour is earnestly exhorting his followers to higher virtue, and a greater degree of perfection, than the rest of the world attained to. Now, says he, *if ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive, what thanks have ye? But* (mark the opposition,) *I say unto you, lend, not despairing.* The

word *but* must make an opposition, all will grant; and I wonder what opposition, what difference there is between hoping to receive, and not despairing to receive. Sinners lend hoping, but Christians must lend not despairing. Is not this a high degree of perfection in a Christian, think ye, above an heathen? But there may be another subterfuge; *Not despairing*, that is, *But that God will repay you.* I confess, if the next words had given a reason of the former, and said, *For your reward shall be great*, there had been some colour for this interpretation. But the words are a distinct sentence, giving an encouragement to the practice of all the duties of mercy and charity before required; *And your reward shall be great.* Now then, if these words μηδὲν ἀπελπίζοντες, do condemn mental usury, then surely much more that gross and formal usury which is owned and established by paper, wax, and witnesses.

This then seems to be our Saviour's doctrine, that his followers should not be usurers. Now I will a little consider his discipline; and that I find was very severe against usurers, reproving them, spoiling their trade, and casting them out of the temple. The story is very famous, confirmed by the mouth of four witnesses, even every one of the evangelists, *Mat.* xii. *Mark* xi. *Luke* xix. *John* ii. There was good care taken, we see, that this passage should not be forgotten. And our Saviour's zeal in this thing is very remarkable, I think I may say singular. For I do not remember that ever else he exercised such discipline on any sort of men; that he ever beat any man besides, nor reformed abuses thus with

his own hands. The disciples might well take notice of it indeed, as a singular piece of zeal, when they saw their Master, a meek, peaceable person, who never used to concern himself in other men's matters, nor intermeddle in their affairs, though sometimes courted to it; and one who would rather pay money wrongfully, than give any offence; when they saw him bestir himself, and make such a bustle in the temple, overturning tables and seats, scattering money up and down, driving out men and beasts with a scourge made by his own hands. But here the learned usurer, (and indeed they say some learned men are usurers,) criticises on the words κερματισται and κολλυβισται which we translate *money-changers;* and tell us, that they signify such persons as sat usually in the market, and at this time profanely in the temple, to change greater money into smaller, for the convenience of buyers and sellers. I believe the words signify thus, and the etymology of them imports as much; but yet these critics themselves (as Ravanellus for example) confess that these men did *quæstum facere*, make a gain of their changing, or lending, or whatsoever it was. Usurers indeed are very modest, they will scarce own their own name at this day; and I suppose they might be somewhat shy then, rather choosing to be denominated from their changing money, than from letting out to usury. But yet it is very plain, that these money merchants here spoken of, who had their tables in the temple, were usurers, letting out their own, or other men's money, for advantage. This the constant signification of the word *trapezitæ*,

or table-men, in profane authors, does justify; and not only in them, but in the holy Gospel too, which tells us almost *in terminis*, [in the very terms,] that they were usurers, Mat. xxv. 27. *Thou oughtest to have put my money to exchange,* (τραπεζίταις) *and then at my coming, I should have received my own with usury.*

Well, but though these changers of money be granted to be usurers, yet say the theological usurers, (and indeed they say that some divines also are usurers,) "The severity that they met with from our Saviour was not because they were usurers, but because they profaned the temple with their tables; for how harmless a thing soever usury is, though it be as innocent as doves, yet it is not fit that either it or they should come into the holy temple." I confess with the apostle, it is true, *There is no agreement between the table of the Lord and the table of devils;* but yet if we look well into our Saviour's behaviour in this act, we shall find, that as by his overthrowing their tables, and thrusting them out, he chastised their profaneness; so by his verbal reproof he taxes their very employment, calling them a company of thieves, Matt. xxi. 13. *Ye have made it a den of thieves.* This [*Ye*] cannot be meant of the buyers and sellers. Buying and selling is a very warrantable thing, especially when it relates to the service of God, as their's did. Besides, Christ gave them their lesson by themselves, as St. John tells us, John ii. 16. *Make not my Father's house a house of merchandize.* It remains then that the [*Ye*] must be directed to the usurers, whom he ranks among thieves. If

any body has a mind to solve the matter and say, "Perhaps they were not honest usurers," I am of the same mind; and so, at last, we are unawares agreed.

MEDITATION XXIX.

Of human authorities against usury.

For my own part, I do not pretend to be a person of great reading. But I have read the books of some men, who have read many books; and I verily think by what I have found in them, that the very quotations out of books against usury, would of themselves make a considerable book. But I am resolved not to enlarge here, as depending rather on the sure testimony already brought. As for myself, I think if I had ever so great a mind to a thing, and plausible arguments for it too, I should hardly adventure on a thing so universally condemned both by heathens and Christians, and these both Papists and Protestants, councils, fathers, and modern divines of the greatest reputation. The general councils of Agatha, the first Nicene council, the first council of Arles, the first and second of Carthage, the Eliberitan council, the council of Tours, and the Lateran council, with others, are cited to this purpose, as condemning and censuring usurers more or less. The best recorders of the matters of primitive times assure us, that the person suspected of usury, was denied the common salutations in the streets, and the kiss of charity in

the church; his house, usually called the seat of Satan, and it was held unlawful so much as to fetch fire from thence. But how much fire is fetched from thence now-a-days, even to the consuming of the houses, and land too, of them who fetch it! It were endless almost to quote the passages out of the Greek and Latin fathers condemning usury, such as Clemens Alexandrinus, Basil, Gregory Nyssen, Gregory Nazianzen, Chrysostom, Tertullian, Lactantius, Ambrose, Jerome, Augustine, and many others. The canon law contained in the decretals, and the civil law give the same verdict. And our statute law, both in the time of the Britons, Saxons and Normans, until Edward the Sixth, is to the same purpose; for which I refer any one, who has a mind to be particularly acquainted, to Dr. Fenton's book written on this subject. The heathen writers generally tax it. Cato says, the usurer was condemned in a four-fold restitution by the law. The philosophers, Plato, Aristotle, and the rest, bring many arguments against it. The poets, after their manner, condemn it by *epithets*, calling it *Usura vorax*, *turpia lucra fœnoris*, *turpiter exhauriens privatas opes*, *depascens publica commoda*, [voracious usury; the base gains of usury; meanly exhausting private wealth, and preying on the public advantage;] and the usurer with them is a man, *Divitias injusto fœnore quærens*, [who seeks riches by unjust usury.] It would be voluminous almost, to give in but the names of modern divines, (however different in their persuasions concerning other things,) that consent in the censuring of usury. For both the

Presbyterian assembly of divines in their annotations, (and how many eminent divines there were in that assembly I know not,) and the low country divines, select, learned men in their annotations, and the Episcopal divines in their books, (some of which were written on purpose,) do speak to the same import, and represent usurers to be what Erasmus in plain terms calls them, *Personas odiosas*, [hateful people.] As for the annotations, both English and Dutch, (in the composing of which, so many famous men were employed,) I need not, save to refer any man thither, that has a mind to know their sense. I will therefore conclude this testimony with three of the most learned casuists among the bishops of the Church of England, since the reformation; bishop Jewel, bishop Andrews, bishop Sanderson.

As for bishop Andrews, it is well known that he wrote a theological treatise, on purpose to condemn usury; and that he wrote it in defence of the Church of England, against the slander that she lay under; so that he seems to speak the mind of the whole Church of England, out of whom I will only observe what he quotes from Hottomannus, as to the civil law, (though he is otherwise full of authorities and arguments against usury.) From him he quotes these maxims against usury.

"That it is of the very essence of lending, that it be free and gratuitous.

"That men are not to receive certain profit, from uncertain negotiations or adventures.

"That nothing of gain is to be exacted, where nothing is exchanged.

"That society cannot subsist without the communication of damages and hazards, as well as profits.

"That things that are consumed in their using, are not capable of *usus fructus*, which is the use or profit of what is another's, the propriety or substance of the thing being still the owner's.

"That human laws, regulating the excess of usury, do not invalidate the divine law absolutely forbidding it."

These things I have only briefly quoted out of him, to explain the sense of the civil law; and so I will dismiss him, because it is an easy thing for any conscientious man to have recourse to the book itself.

But there is a treatise of bishop Jewel, an exposition of the epistles to the Thessalonians, which possibly may be but in few hands, I will therefore tell more largely what he says to this point. I presume he is generally acknowledged to be a learned and pious Protestant. That he wrote much and well in the defence of the Protestant religion against Papists, his book (which has the honour to be kept in churches with the Bible and the homilies) does declare; and that he was exiled for the profession of it, our histories do assure us. This good and learned man, in his sermons on 1 *Thess.* iv. at Salisbury, takes an occasion from the sixth verse to discourse about usury, and says, in plain terms, that "It is such a kind of bargaining, as no good or godly man ever used; a monster in nature; the overthrow of kingdoms; the plague of the world, and the misery of the people." And having showed

what a bad origin it is of, and what woful effects attend it, takes an occasion from the fore-quoted passage of Cato, to show, in many respects, that "the usurer is worse than the thief." And having largely quoted many learned and holy fathers, such as Ambrose, Augustine, Chrysostom, Hierome, speaking very positively and sharply against usury, he adds, that "There was never any religion, nor sect, nor state, nor degree, nor profession of men, but they have disliked it." They are the very words in the book. Philosophers, Greeks, Latins, lawyers, divines, catholics, heretics, all tongues and nations, have ever thought an usurer as dangerous as a thief. "And our forefathers," saith he, "so much abhorred this trade, that they thought an usurer unworthy to live in the company of Christian men; they excommunicated him; they suffered him not to be a witness in matters of law; they suffered him not to make a testament, and to bestow his goods by will; nor after his death, to be buried in the burying-place of Christians." Towards the end of his sermon, he calls God for a record on his soul, that "he has not deceived them, but had spoken unto them the truth;" and says, "If I be deceived in this matter, O God, thou hast deceived me. Thy word is plain. Thou sayest, *Thou shalt take no usury; and he who taketh increase shall not live.*" And, at last, applying himself to his auditors, he adds these words, "I hear that there are certain in this city who wallow wretchedly in this filthiness, without repentance. I give them warning, in the hearing of you all, and in the presence of God, that they forsake

that cruel and detestable sin; if otherwise they continue therein, I will open their shame, and denounce excommunication against them, and publish their names in this place before you all, that you may know them, and abhor them as the plagues and monsters of the world."

If this vehement testimony should be less regarded as being the testimony of an old-fashioned divine, as possibly some novices will speak, I will add a very late and learned one, a professor of divinity, a professed casuist, whose learned determinations in other cases are taken for oracles, even by those very men who refuse to hearken to him in this. I mean Dr. Sanderson, late bishop of Lincoln, who, in his fourth sermon, *Ad Populum*, having told us that most of the learned have concluded usury simply unlawful, delivers his own judgment presently after in these words; "The texts of Scripture are so express, and the grounds of reason so strong against all usury, that when I weigh these on the one side, and on the other side how nothing at all that is, which I ever yet saw or heard alleged to the contrary, I cannot find in myself charity enough to absolve any kind of usury, with what cautions or circumstances soever qualified, from being a sin." And again, towards the end of that discourse, he says, "It were not possible usurers should be so bitterly inveighed against by sober heathen writers, so severely censured by the civil and canon laws, so uniformly condemned by godly fathers and councils, so universally hated by all men of all sorts, in all ages and countries, (here, on the margin, he quotes *Jer.* xv. 10.) as histo-

ries and experience manifest they ever have been and are, if their practice and calling had been any way profitable, and not indeed every way hurtful and incommodious, both to private men and public societies."

MEDITATION XXX.

The arguments for usury considered.

Against these authorities, divine and human, usury defends itself mostly by reasons; though indeed the usurers of the present age do justify themselves from some authorities of the last age; which I will also consider in its place. And here, first, if I had a mind to espouse a party, I might justly demand, since the word of God has so plainly and frequently condemned, forbidden, and threatened usury, with what confidence any mortal man can or dare justify it, lest he should be found θεομαχεῖν, [to fight against God,] as the great doctor of the Jews sometimes argued; and might ask with the great apostle, *Who art thou, O man, that repliest against God?* Shall the creature demand of the Creator a reason of his law? That were bold. But shall he seek out reasons to evacuate and make void his laws? That is rebellious. St. Augustine somewhere says, "That as many things are forbidden because they are evil, so some things are evil because forbidden." Whether it be so or not, I cannot determine; but sure I am, that all things are evil that are forbidden. And cannot God have a reason of his

laws, except we can comprehend it? Are not his thoughts higher than our thoughts; his thoughts of commanding, higher than our thoughts of conceiving? And if we have not so much wit as to see a reason of every divine command, yet we ought to have so much grace, as to think there may be a reason which we do not see. Alas! Degenerate man is apt to make his own lust and interest the standard of right and wrong, but the Supreme Mind is the fountain of truth and goodness, and bestows reality and coherence on all things; so that a thing is therefore true and good, because comprehended by this infinite unerring Wisdom and Will. If there were no evil lusts in men, there would be no usury, no oppression, no unmerciful and covetous practices. And whilst there are these lusts, there shall be no law against unmercifulness or covetousness, which they will not quarrel with. And no wonder; for I have run over the ten commandments, those plain words, which, for their authority, Moses tells us, *were written with the finger of God;* and for their plainness, one might say, were written with a beam of the sun. And I find there is not one of them, but the wit of man has been carping at it. One may safely say, That not only a third part of the stars of heaven have been assaulted by this dragon's tail, but there is not a star in the Scripture firmament which has not been struck at thereby:

Et si non cecidit potuit cecidisse videri.

[And if it fell not, might have seemed to fall.]

I think it is a passage of Seneca's somewhere, "If it were enough to be accused, no one would be innocent." And I think it is as proper to say, If it be confutation enough for a law or doctrine to be questioned, or quarrelled with, nothing in the Scriptures shall be true.

But because men will cry out and clamour if they be not heard, I will hear what is said, and suppose every thing that I think may be said in defence of usury. So long as the texts stand translated against usury in our Bibles as they do, most men are so modest or so wary, that they think it not worth the while to go about to establish the doctrine of usury, till these texts be undermined; and therefore the first attempt is to prove, That usury is not condemned in those texts in the Old Testament, that men think do condemn it. The next is to prove, That though it be condemned in the Old Testament, yet it is not in the New.

To prove that usury is not simply condemned in the Old Testament, it is vehemently urged, that the word *Neshek* signifies biting and oppressing usury. This they are content should be condemned; but this does not hurt the usury, that does not hurt. Knock out the teeth of that usury that has none, and spare not.

To this is answered, That all usury does in one degree or other hurt, if it be compared to charity; and that the whole kind of it is born toothed, though some sorts of it have sharper teeth than others. And what matters it, if one sort be less rapacious than another, where every one is a harpy?

Again, arguments drawn from etymologies are accounted weak and deceitful, and very insufficient to build doctrines of divinity on. I am not ignorant of etymology, but yet where I am most sure and certain, I should tremble to venture the salvation of my soul on the derivation of a word. But allowing that the word *Neshek* signifies only biting and oppressing usury, can any man infer, that therefore there is any usury that is not biting. Would not any good grammarian rather conclude, that all usury is biting, because the general word that signifies usury, comes from a root that signifies to bite. I think it as shrewd an argument against usury as grammar can furnish a man with, that it is called *Neshek*. As it is a good argument in grammar, that the nature of an *Holocaust*, is to be laid on the altar, and to ascend up towards heaven in the smoke, being consumed with the fire, because *Gnolah*, the word that signifies *a whole burnt offering*, comes from *Gnalah*, to ascend. And that the nature of an alms is to proceed from pity or mercy; and that every alms should do so, because the word ελεημοσυνη that signifies alms, comes from a root that signifies mercy, with thousands more of the like nature in Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin. If any argument is drawn from the notation of the word, it will be this, That all usury is as certainly biting, as that it is the nature of a serpent to creep. And, indeed, for creeping and stinging, I know not how one could bring a fitter word to match *Neshek*; *Ubi creditor mordet cum exigit quod, non dedit, debitor mordetur cum reddit quod non accepit*, [Where the creditor is biting

while he requires that which he has not given, there the debtor is bitten, while he restores that which he has not received.] Buxtorf.

But lastly, Supposing by *Neshek*, that oppressive usury only be condemned, and that there is some usury that is not so; yet I hope the word *Tarbith* is of an innocent extraction, coming from a verb that signifies to multiply, and yet this is as flatly condemned as the stinging *Neshek*, Lev. xxv. 36. and the prophet Ezekiel makes no difference, but still cries *Neshek Vetarbith*, Ezek. xviii. 8. xxii. 12.

But however, say the defendants, usury is only forbidden towards the poor by the law, therefore it is permitted towards the rich; by which it appears that it is not simply and absolutely forbidden.

It is confessed that the poor are named in *Lev.* xxv. and *Exod.* xxii. but it must also be remembered that elsewhere there is no mention of the poor at all, but the prohibition is general. The psalmist and the prophets say nothing of the poor, but flatly, and without exception, condemn usury. Secondly, It may truly be said, that any man, even a rich man, when he is constrained for his necessary occasions to borrow of his neighbour, is *pro hic et nunc*, as they speak, [for that present time,] poor.

Thirdly, The poor are therefore named when they are named, because they are the people necessitated to borrow, and most subject to oppression. He who argues thus, Usury is only forbidden towards the poor, therefore it is permitted towards the rich, may as well argue, from

the words next before, (*Exod.* xxii. 22.) we are only forbidden to afflict the widow and the fatherless, therefore we are allowed to do what we will with those who have husbands and parents; or from *Deut.* xxvii. 18. we are forbidden to cause the blind to wander out of the way, therefore we may safely misguide any who have eyes in their heads. What strange work would such kind of argument make? We are commanded plainly in *Deut.* xviii. 7. to lend to our poor brother; therefore, (according to the logic of these men,) we are not to lend to the rich. Well, be it so. Now when we lend to the poor, we are expressly charged (*Exod.* xxii. 25.) to take no usury of them. It will necessarily follow, then, that no usury at all is lawful.

In a word, if it be good logic or divinity, to say, Such a man is a rich man, usury will not much hurt him, it will indifferently serve to justify the robber as well as the usurer; and the ingenious Hind and Bracy shall go nigh to the canonized.

MEDITATION XXXI.

Other reasons for usury considered.

The next attempt is, to prove, That though usury should be condemned in the Old Testament, yet it is not in the New. I have already proved usury forbidden in the New Testament, both by the precept and practice of the holy Author of that Testament; and proved that this

is no good argument, though it could not be proved. The allegation that I am now to consider is this, there is no intrinsic evil in usury, the laws against it are only political, binding the people of the Jews, and no further concern us, than as oppression is found therein. And this is further proved by the circumstance that usury was permitted to the Jews towards strangers.

As for the former part of this argument; it is *gratis dictum*, [uttered without authority,] that the law against usury was judicial. And methinks it should make any man of any tenderness of conscience, vehemently suspect, that there is something immoral in usury, when he finds it ranked by the psalmist and the prophet, (men of more than legal minds,) among the most notorious immoralities, such as idolatry and murder. What if any Papist or other should say, that the laws against worshipping of images, and of keeping one Sabbath in a week, were only judicial, and concerned the Jewish polity only; must these commandments therefore lose their morality? God forbid. Is it not more reasonable to conclude, that there is something intrinsically evil in usury, because the great and wise Law-giver has so flatly forbidden it, and so severely threatened it, than to conclude there is none, because we can see none? They say this judicial law binds no further than the reasons of it do bind, no further than there is oppression in it. And who can tell but that God does account all usury to be more or less oppressive, because he has forbidden all.

The gracious Law-giver, whose name is Love, better knows what are the several violations of

charity than we do, and he makes usury to be one, setting it so plainly in opposition to charitable lending. Thou shalt be charitable and lend; but thou shalt not put to usury.

Neither doth it hinder usury from being in its own nature evil and oppressive, because it was permitted to the Jews, to exercise it on strangers. There is nothing surely more unrighteous than stealing, and yet there was a time when the supreme Law-giver (who gives no account of his ways to us) permitted, yea, and bade the Israelites to spoil the Egyptians. And why might not he as well permit his people to spoil the heathen nations by usurious lending, as he had before permitted them to spoil the Egyptians by deceitful borrowing: and yet usury remain in its own nature oppressive? It would be a strange boldness to draw into example all things that at any time God hath permitted unto men for a time, by reason of the hardness of their hearts, or dispensed with by virtue of his infinite unaccountable prerogative, of transferring rights from one to another, from Laban to Israel, from Egyptians to Israelites.

Is it not more fair to infer, that if the law only allowed usury to strangers, (who were by the just judgment of God to be weakened and kept under in slavery and poverty,) the Gospel whose every line breathes love and mercy, and the holy Author of it, who has broken down the partition wall, and made all the world brethren, do allow it towards no body at all? But if you will have strangers still, I hope you will not find them among Christians; so that if there be any

place left for this merchandise of money, the usurer must transplant himself into Africa or Asia, and trade there; and try whether by that merciful means he can convert any of those strangers unto the faith of Christ.

If it be pleaded, that in reason a man may do what he will with his own, and make the best he can of it:

It will readily be answered, that man has properly nothing of his own, the propriety is in God, and we are but his stewards, and he has appointed us how we shall lay out his goods; he has forbidden us to use them intemperately, or improve them unjustly. No man may kill himself with a sword, though it be his own, nor play the debauchee with his own maid, nor the drunkard with his own liquor. It is true, a man may make the best he can of his own money, but not the most he can of it. This churlish principle will preclude all charity, and justify the most covetous worldling, who shuts up his bowels against the poor.

They seem to plead strangely for usury, who reduce it to the head of letting out to hire, and match it with letting out of lands or houses for rent. If they would compare it to a man's lending his neighbour a loaf of bread, and afterwards requiring as good a loaf, back again, and a good matter over and above, for his eating that loaf which he lent him to eat, it had been a fitter comparison, I think, and much more congruous. But to wave those several dissimilitudes that might be brought to spoil this comparison, there is just such difference between letting out land

and houses for rent, and money for usury, as there is between a thing allowed of God and all men, and another thing universally forbidden. The great Law-giver I suppose will at last, (but to our great astonishment,) either show us a convincing reason for all his commands, or convince us that his authority was reason sufficient. If any one say, that lending on usury is an act of charity, (as I have heard some say,) because it often proves the support of families, or at least preserves them and their estates from ruin for a season, until time and industry have wrought out better fortunes for them, I will not say with bishop Jewel, that this relief is as if a man should pull out the eye, to cure a blemish in the sight, and that usurers are so necessary to men, as a rust is to iron; nor with St. Ambrose, that such is the kindness of usurers, that they undo those whom they help; comparing them therefore to the scorpion, that embraceth kindly with his legs, and at the same time stingeth with his tail; whose poison also delights men at present, but afterwards kills; but I will suppose that usury has been accidentally beneficial even to the borrower. And yet this is no more than what the worst things in the world have sometimes been. Divines say, that the devil himself has eventually served the salvation of many souls; though I suppose no body ever yet justified the piety of his intentions, or commended the justness of his methods. But to speak plainly, it is not the usury, but the lending, that has been found beneficial. Lending indeed is a great act of charity, and so necessary, that as the world stands, it could scarce

stand without it. But I hope there may be lending without usury. If the minds of men were universally formed into that charitable and benign temper, in which they come out of the hands of God at first, they would give what they could spare, and lend what they could not give, and compassionately wish their poor neighbour what they have not to lend. In a word, they would do to others, as they would that others should do to them; and then I am sure there would be no need of such a thing as usury, to be a vehicle for charity. If there be at this day a necessity of usury, it is but such an one as the lusts of men have made; if there be any charity in it, it is to the usurer's sweet self; it begins at home, and we must thank the providence of God more than the kind intention of the usurer, if it do not end there too; for I dare make an usurer his own casuist here, to say what is his predominant consideration in his usurious contracts, the relief of his neighbour, or his own gratification.

But is there any reason why another man should make gainful purchases or bargains with my money, and I not share with him in the gain? To this is answered, that there is no reason to enforce me to lend my money to make other men rich; the poor are the objects of lending as well as of giving. To lend to the rich to make them still richer, is somewhat like giving to the poor, to make them idle.

But if you have such an excessive kindness for a rich friend, that you will make him still richer, you may either lend him your money freely, or share with him in the hazard; and so

for aught I know, you may safely share with him in the gain.

But can God spread a table in the wilderness; can he provide for orphans, without this ingenious expedient of usury? Yes, surely he can; and they have the greatest security imaginable that he will; for he has as it were taken them into his own attributes, stiling himself the Father of the fatherless.

However there are many ways of paying Paul and not robbing Peter to do it, many ways to secure and improve the portions of orphans, and not be beholden to usury. And if there were none, it were better that all the orphans in the world broke, than that the commands of God should be broken. *Fiat justitia etiam ruente Cœlo*, [let justice be done, if it even ruin the heavens.]

MEDITATION XXXII.

Authorities for usury considered.

Although usury defend itself mostly by arguments, yet of late it does somewhat insist on authorities too; and those divine and human. As for divine authority, I think they despair of finding any thing in the Old Testament to contenance it; but they have some hopes of better encouragement in the New. This I confess, one would think strange, that the Gospel should fall short of the law; and that charity should be more coldly recommended in that, than in this; and that Christians should be allowed a greater se-

verity against their brethren than the Jews, who yet were allowed it for the hardness of their hearts. This, I say, at the first sight, may seem strange; that the most charitable author in the Gospel should make void the law in this point of charity, who in all other things of morality perfected and fulfilled it; that he who made angry words, and lustful looks, to be murder and adultery, which never before were taken to be so, should make usury not to be unlawful, which ever before was taken to be so. Not unlawful did I say? Nay, if there be good divinity in their parabolical arguments, he makes it the duty of all his followers. For so it must be inferred from the parable, Mat. xxv. 27. *Thou oughtest to have put my money to the exchangers.* If we will understand the text literally, we must make it the indispensible duty of all Christians to be usurers; and we must say, that none but usurers shall be saved. For it follows, ver. 30. *Cast the unprofitable servant into outer darkness.* But these doctrines the greatest usurer in the world, I suppose, will think too, too abominable. The meaning of the parable, then, is the same with that of the unjust steward in Luke xvi. and they are both no more than this, that if the men of this world are so set on the world, that they will maintain and increase their estates, even by usury and knavery, it will be an arrant shame for children of light not to improve the grace of God, and work out their own salvation with great zeal and diligence; and the covetousness and craftiness of earthly mammonists about so mean a thing as an estate or livelihood, will at last condemn the coldness

and carelessness of professing Christians about the important matters of eternity. This is plainly the scope of the parable, which alone can be formed into a doctrine; but if any cunning usurer will needs raise doctrines from the parabolical phrase and mode of speech, let him preach those two which I named at first, and let him add this third doctrine, which seems most naturally to flow from the conjunction illative in the 27th verse, that it is the manner and property of covetous and unjust men, to improve their money by usury. View the context well, and see whether this be not the most natural doctrine, *Thou knowest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather here I have not strewed?* That is, thou knewest that I was a greedy, griping, unjust man; what then? How shouldest thou have behaved thyself, according to this apprehension that thou hadst of me? Why, thou oughtest therefore to have put out my money to usury. Now if any man will confess himself to be an unjust and rapacious person, let him take usury by the authority of this text; for it is of these alone that the text declares, that it is their manner to put their money to the exchangers.

The human authority that is brought for usury, is the law of the land, and some modern writers.

As for the law of the land, it is fit that great reverence should be had thereunto; and it is a thousand pities, that so sacred a thing as that should establish iniquity. But what, does this law command usury? No, that is not pretended. Does it allow it? Yes, it seems to allow it, inas-

much as it limits, and restrains it. This is no concluding argument. If a physician say to his patient, you must not drink above such a quantity of wine, it will be your death if you do; it does not follow that he may safely drink so much; it may be for all that, that the physician had rather he drink none at all. I have not seen the statute of the queen, but I have read in good authors, that the statute forbids all usury, and afterwards lays a great penalty on all those that exceed such a measure. This amounts but to a very weak allowance. But suppose the law of the land had more expressly allowed usury for the hardness of men's hearts, and for preventing the greater exactions and oppressions; it is only in pursuance of that known state maxim, better an inconvenience than a mischief. What if usury be, and be permitted in France, Spain, Italy, Rome, &c. What if it be every where and suffered, says bishop Jewel in the afore-quoted place? So the devil is every where, and suffered; and so are the stews suffered in France, Spain, Italy, Lombardy, Naples, Rome, and Venice. The Canaanites were among the people of God, and suffered; but they were as goads in their sides, and thorns in their eyes. As these were suffered and as the stews are suffered, and as the devil is suffered, so, and no otherwise are usurers.

But above all arguments and authorities, the authority of some modern divines of great note, has given the greatest encouragement to the practice of usury. It cannot be denied but that Calvin, Bucer, Zanchy, and some othor divines of late, have spoken favourably of usury, and have

found out some distinctions to justify some kinds thereof, unknown to all the learned fathers that went before them. I will not stand to consider what necessities in time of persecution put them on this great project; but will a little consider of Mr. Calvin's mind in this matter; and then what a kind of usury, and how qualified it must be, that he allows.

It is very evident that Calvin had much rather there were no usury in the world than any, by what he says in one of his epistles, *In rep. bene constituta*, &c. In a well constituted commonwealth, no usury is to be endured; but ought altogehter to be cast out of the society of men. To practise usury is a disingenuous way of trading, and unbecoming a pious and honest man. In his harmony on the pentateuch, I read these words, *Fieri vix potest quin fœnoris exactione exhauriantur inopes, et prope exugatur eorum sanguis*, [it can hardly be, but that, by the exaction of usury, the poor should be drained, and their blood almost exhausted.] Again, *Permissum fuit gentibus fœnerari, quod discrimen lex spiritualis non admittit*, [the Gentiles were allowed to take usury, which hazard the spiritual law does not admit.] Again, *Certe minime vid etur licitum filiis Dei, quod prophani quoq; homines detestati sunt. Scimus ubiq; et semper exosum et infame fuisse fœneratorum nomen*, [Certainly, that appears by no means allowed to the sons of God, which the most profane minds have detested. We know that every where and always the name of usurers was hated and infamous.] And again, *Fœnus quidem exercere, cum inter pudendos et turpes quæstus duxerint profani*

scriptores, multo minus tolerabile est inter filios Dei, [To practise usury, since it was esteemed a base and shameful employ by profane writers, is still less tolerable among the children of God.]

And after he had given his opinion that all usury without exception is not to be condemned, and allowed some usury, so it be exercised according to that golden rule, do not to another what thou wouldest not should be done to thyself; and had laid down two cases wherein he thinks usury lawful (which I will relate hereafter) fearing lest any one should encourage himself too far from what he had said, *Nolim quidem meo patrocinio usuras fovere, atq; utinam nomen ipsum abolitum esset e mundo*, [I should be unwilling to encourage usury by my own patronage, and wish its very name abolished.] By all which we plainly perceive what good opinion this learned man had of usury; he would be accounted no patron of it. But a patron he must be, because say the usurers, he does not simply condemn all usury. Well, if Mr. Calvin must, against his will, patronize usury, I hope they will give him leave to determine what usury he patronizes, and with what limitations; which is the second thing I was to consider.

To make usury lawful, he lays down the following rules:

1. That a man do not make a trade or a custom of it.

2. That it be not practised on the needy.

3. If a man be not so addicted to gain, but that he be still ready furnished, and willing to furnish his poor neighbour freely.

4. That the rule of Christ be ever our touchstone, to deal no otherwise than we would be dealt with.

5. That the borrower's gain be so much more at least as the usurer's interest comes to.

6. That no prejudice be done to the commonwealth.

7. That which never exceeds the stint set by the law.

And Zanchy, another patron of usury, says that the usury which he himself, and Calvin and Bucer defended, was to be thus qualified, that if it appear the borrower doth gain little or nothing, and if he lose of the principal, thou must bear part of the loss.

And now I wish that every one that takes encouragement from the arguments of these divines to practise usury, would conscientiously observe their restrictions also in practising it; and then I believe that though usury should be found ever so lawful, yet there would be no usurers.

MEDITATION XXXIII.

What usurers are lovers of the world.

According to my method propounded, it now only remains to show what usurers are lovers of the world. But this I cannot well do, till I have premised, that some things are abusively called usury, or that all things are not usury that look like it, or are called by that name. In the last meditation I had occasion to quote out of Calvin

on the pentateuch, that his opinion was, that there are some kinds of usury lawful; and he names two. I am wholly of his opinion, that those two things are just and lawful; but here I differ from him, I do not think they are properly usury. So that although these two things be lawful, yet still all usury may remain unlawful. The things he instances in are these:

First, To receive satisfaction for the loss or damage, that I have already suffered from a man's keeping my money, beyond the time that I lent it to him, for it is just that the borrower should repay my loss that I sustain for his sake and by his fault. Bishop Jewel speaking of the difference between usury and interest, confesses interest to be lawful, which he explains thus; I lend my neighbour twenty pounds freely without usury to such a day, for I am then to pay it on an obligation of my own, I have no more but this, and if I fail of payment, I must forfeit five pounds. This neighbour fails me, whereby I lose five pounds. If I require that five pounds of him, it is interest, not usury, and it is just. In usury I seek to be a gainer; in interest, I only seek to be no loser, which stands with equity and conscience. But then this loss of mine must be really sustained. For says Calvin himself in the place afore cited, *Semper excogitant homines astuti captiunculas quibus deum illudant*, &c. [Cunning men will constantly be thinking of some subterfuge, by which they may elude even God.] Thus, whereas all men abhorred the name of usury, anothert name was found to escape the odium by an honest colour, and so they call it in-

terest, as if it were only a compensation of their loss, *Quanti intererat pecuniæ suæ usu carere*, [As much damage as it did to them, to be deprived of their money.] But there is no kind of usury which men may not put this specious pretence on; for whosoever has present money, when he is to lend it, will pretend it may be profitable to him to buy, or trade, or get some kind of gain withal daily, so there will always be place for compensation, when no creditor can lend his money without loss. Thus the name of interest, whereas in truth, it is the same with usury, is the covering of an odious matter. But alas that ever men should think by cavil to elude the judgment of God, where integrity alone can be our defence. The Jews did prevaricate partly after the same manner, the word *neshek*, that comes from biting, sounded very harsh; therefore because no man was willing to be accounted a hungry dog, that fed himself by biting others; they found out a sanctuary for their shame, they called it *tarbith*, that is, increase. But God, to meet with these fallacies, condemns usury both by the name of biting and increase, *Lev.* xxv. 36. *Ezek.* xviii. 12. God does antervert all vain excuses, and in general condemns *quamlibet sortis accessionem*, whatever is more than the principal.

I have more fully transcribed the words of this author, because he is taken to be a patron of usury, and to obviate that old thread-bare argument for usury, of *Damnum ex lucro cessante*, [Injury from ceasing to be gainful.] To say I have already sustained damage, by not having my money paid at the time prefixed, and there-

fore I require satisfaction for that damage, is good sense, and good divinity, for aught I know; but it is not usury. But to say I have sustained damage because I might possibly have gained by that money some other way, is not good logic; for that which may be, may also not be. Neither is it good divinity, that therefore I should oblige my neighbour, or his heirs, to make me a satisfaction for the want of this possible gain; for I might have trafficked with my money, and possibly I might have lost by so doing. And does not the avoiding of a possible loss sufficiently recompence the loss of a possible gain? The possible, but uncertain hopes of gain, which either the usurer or the borrower conceives, must not set the rate and value on the thing lent, but the present intrinsical worth of it.

The other thing that Mr. Calvin instances in, as a sort of lawful usury, is, If I lend a rich man a part of a great sum of money to buy land with, may I not receive a proportionable part of the actual rents, or profits of land, till my money be repaid me? This, he says, is lawful, and I know no body who denies it; but I deny it to be usury; it looks rather like a kind of partnership or temporary joint purchasing.

Nay, if a man will lend his money to another for any gainful use, and runs the hazard of the principal, he may, for aught I know, without usury, warrantably contract for an equitable part of the gain, when it shall be actually received, allowing for the pain and charge of the borrowers in managing it.

If a man, weary of the business of the world, will give his stock of money to another, engaging him to maintain him whilst he lives, he parts with the principal; it is a gift with a condition, "it is no usury," says bishop Jewel, in his forequoted comment on 1 *Thess.* iv. 6.

I will add further, That to receive a gratification or acknowledgment of any kind for money, or other things lent, is not in its own nature usurious, nor simply unlawful. God never intended to bind men up from gratitude, nor to forbid them to render one good turn for another. If my neighbour lend me money freely and charitably, and I happen to be advantaged, and much befriended by his courtesy, and am so grateful and ingenuous, as to requite his kindness in any thing wherein I can, and do it freely, without his contracting for it or requiring it; I cannot understand how my gratitude should make him a usurer, so long as his lending was freely, and my acknowledgment uncontracted and unconstrained.

So that instead of saying there are some sorts of usury lawful, let us say there are some lawful things that look like usury, yet are not it, and we are all agreed.

But if we would know who are the worldly usurers, (though I do not excuse any from being so,) it is evident that these that follow are of that sort:

Such as exceed the limits of the laws of the land, either directly or indirectly; who, unto usury, superadd those monsters of procuration and continuation, commit iniquity to be punished by the judge, and are accounted oppressors even by the more modest sort of usurers.

For a man, especially a divine, to require usury, where no profit has been made of the principal, yea, where the very principal has miscarried, and that of his friend, to whom he is beholden, and to extort it too, every one will say is a black character. But perhaps few believe that there is any such; neither should I, if I had not seen and known them.

To make a trade of usury, and to get one's living out of the sweat of other men's brows, is condemned for an idle wicked life, even by the most favourable censors, yea, by the very patrons of usury.

To bind men and their friends, and their heirs and executors, to make a certain advantageous return of an uncertain hazardous employment of money, is very cruel, and an atheistical confronting of Divine Providence.

To be content our neighbour should be subjected to all casualties, and to take no further care but to secure our own profit, is filthily selfish, and somewhat like the ill-conditioned generation, of whom Christ Jesus complained; who laid great and heavy burdens on the backs of others, which they themselves refused to touch with the least of their fingers.

To seek our own advantage or enrichment by the hurt or disadvantage of others, is flatly against the law of lovers, and the golden rule of charity, which the law commends, and the Gospel magnifies and enforces.

To make the poor pay for the use of money, or any other thing, which is merely for the relief of their necessities, is, by the most favoura-

ble interpreters, granted to be directly against the plain letter of the law; even by those, I say, who allow a little stricter dealing with the rich.

Let the usurers of England clear themselves of these spots, if they can; if they cannot, let them sit down with the mark of the world on them, till they can.

MEDITATION XXXIV.

Dissuasives from the love of the world, drawn from the consideration of our profession.

What shall I say more? How shall I come closer? Having examined man in his moral capacity, and now in his political, wherein he is more discernible than in that; modesty will not suffer me to come any nearer; for I know not how, except I should *digito monstrare et dicere hic est.* [point the finger, and say this is the man!] except I should call men by their names, and say, thou John, or Thomas, or Richard, or Robert, or the like, art a lover of the world. These two things I am sure of, that there are but two sorts of people in the whole world, viz. The lovers of God and the lovers of the world; and that the former of these are blessed, and shall be yet more blessed; the latter are miserable and accursed. Who can but infer hence, that it is most absolutely necessary for every man to examine himself, which sort of men he belongs to? I have given what assistance I can in this important inquiry; which I think is the highest service that

can be done for the sons of men; except it be those endeavours which are directly used to disentangle the souls of men from the love of the world, and to engage them in the love of the Father. It is not in me, alas, to fashion the affections of men. (Oh, thou blessed sovereign Creator, and Searcher, Maker and Renewer of hearts, put in thy hand by the hole of the door, that the bowels of men may be moved to thee. Come into thy temple, O God, and let not that sacred thing, the heart of man, be any longer a place of merchandize, a den of thieves!) But though I cannot change the minds of men, yet as I have showed sufficient reason why they should be changed, so I can propound motives to induce them to labour after a change. But the house must be cleansed from its filth and rubbish, before the glory of the Lord will fill it. I begin, therefore, with some dissuasives from the predominant love of the world. And here I will content myself with a few of many.

First, If we make any reckoning of our noble title of Christians, and disciples of Christ Jesus; if it be any thing to us that we have entertained the Gospel, and are distinguished from heathens; let us cast out this predominant love of the world; otherwise, we shall bear the name of Christians, but be of the nature of heathens. A name, though ever so honourable, is but little available in any case; but I am sure, in the case of religion, it is not available at all, without a nature, either to the present comfort or future happiness of men. Why? A Christian loving the world, is but in name only distinguished from a

heathen. And truly, methinks, this is but a small honour, or consolation either. Who can reasonably bless himself that he is not an unbeliever, when in the mean time he is a hypocrite? Nay, rather, will not the heathen, adjudged to a more tolerable condemnation hereafter, bless himself that he was not a Christian, and had not so many obligations laid on him to forsake this world, nor such clear revelation of another as we have? It had been a goodly errand indeed for Christ to come into the world, and to gather together a company of disciples, only to bear his name, but really not to differ from other men, nor from what they themselves were before! Was it worthy of his blood, can we think, to purchase to himself a people peculiar only in nominal relation? Why, certainly, under the specious title of Christians, we are still heathens indeed and in truth, if our predominant love and care be of the things of this world! For so the heathens are described by our Lord himself, to have their minds mainly on worldly things, Mat. vi. 32. *After these things do the Gentiles seek.* And he would have his disciples to differ from the Gentiles in their seekings and lovings, as well as in their professing.

MEDITATION XXXV.

Further dissuasives, from the consideration of the nature of our souls.

Secondly, If we value ourselves only as men, creatures of noble natures and large capacities,

let us consider that the world, with all its trinity of riches, pleasures and honours, is inferior and inadequate to our souls; below our faculties, and insufficient to our necessities. It is justly accounted dishonourable for persons of noble extraction or ingenuous education to mingle themselves with persons or in things mean and unsuitable to them, as if it were a debasing and degrading of themselves. But if this mixture be a familiarity, it is still worse; and if this familiarity be an union, it is worst of all. What a stir do we make about a gentleman marrying his maid, or a lady her groom. Great indignation arises in the gentry of the neighbourhood presently, and much wonder in the rest. But the soul of the meanest man, matching with the most splendid object in the creation, and uniting itself thereunto, incurs a far sorer censure, and requires a far greater pity. The sun stooping to mortal Clymene, or the moon to the shepherd's boy Endymion, or Venus in the arms of dirty Vulcan, or Jupiter assuming horns and hoofs, for the sake of a mortal mistress, or whatever the poets have invented to the disparagement of their wanton deities, does but represent the infamous mixture which that offspring of Heaven, the soul of man, does make of itself with things terrene and mortal. A generous eagle preying upon carrion, or a glorious star falling from its sphere, and choaking itself in the dust; or the Roman emperor catching flies, are tolerable absurdities in comparison of that abominable and mischievous choice which all worldly minded men in the world do make. Does the Maker of souls, who best knows

the worth of them, value one soul, any one soul, against the whole world? And shall we think a little scantling of this world a fit match for millions of souls? Dost thou not know, O my soul, that thou art a son of God, the brother of angels, nay, even of the Angel of the covenant, by adoption; and canst thou pitch and fix on any object below God himself? It is unreasonable, it is unjust, it is sinful and shameful. Believe it, all inordinate love of thyself is an incestuous, and of other things a Sodomitical conjunction.

And besides the relation and capacity of souls, we may distinctly consider the wants and necessities of souls, which are such, as the world and the fulness thereof cannot supply or relieve. The appetites and thirsts of souls are great and strong, which the creature's cistern can never slake and quench. There is a kind of infinity in the lustings and cravings of souls, which all the possessions and conquests of the world could never yet fully gratify; *Curtæ nescio quid semper abest rei*, [There is in every object some undefined curtailment.] You may as well imagine that Behemoth, that drinketh up Jordan into his mouth, should be satisfied with one drop of a bucket, or the wrangling of a hungry infant for the full breast, should be from day to day silenced by gaudes and rattles, as that the thirst of a soul after rest and happiness, should be quenched and satisfied by creature fulness. No, no, the whole world is those husks that will not fill the belly of the hungry prodigal. Take it in all its dimensions, and a man may say of it, The bed is too short for a soul to stretch itself upon, and the

covering is too narrow for a soul to wrap itself in.

To which I may add, that the heart of man is also a sacred thing, a thing consecrate to God. The profanation of temples was ever banned. Our Saviour was never so transported with zeal as against the profaners of the temple; but certainly to entertain the world in our hearts is greater profaneness, than to drive a trade in the temple, to make a dove house or a stable of it.

MEDITATION XXXVI.

From the consideration of the nature of the world.

The uncertainty and unsatisfying nature of the world, and all worldly things, is a peculiar theme, which every young scholar can rhetoricate upon and declaim against, before he has made any experiment of it, or any choice of a better object. The books of men are as full of invectives against the world, as their hearts are at the same time of the love of it. He is a very fool indeed who cannot repeat the words of the wise man, and cry *all is vanity;* but he is a wise man who heartily believes what he repeats, and acts agreeably to his belief.

The poetical fancies do prettily resemble pleasures to Syrens, which sing sweetly, and by their pleasant voice and beautiful aspect, allure the passenger to themselves, and then hug and kill him. And who can deny that this is somewhat like to Solomon's whorish woman in the Prov-

erbs? They compare honour to the wings of Icarus, mounting him so unreasonably high, that they are melted off by the heat, and so down comes that aspiring mortal to a degree lower than that from which he arose, and leaves nothing behind him, but a ridiculous fame of bold aspiring, *Magnis tamen excidit ausis.* Not unlike which is the description that the psalmist makes of man, who is in honour and abideth not, He stands on pinnacles indeed, but they are very slippery ones, from which he is soon cast down into destruction.

They resemble riches to the great wooden horse which the silly Trojans admitted into the very heart of the city, and rejoiced in it as a rare present, sent them by the gods; but it proved full of deadly enemies that presently murdered them in their security. And the apostle speaks to the same purpose, when he tells us, that *they who will be rich fall into temptations, and a snare, and many hurtful lusts, which drown men in perdition;* and coveting after them, is piercing one's self through with many sorrows.

I have read of a bird in some parts of India, that has a note, singing in the language of that country, Here he is. This he is always singing, as our country cuckoos. Hereby many curious travellers are invited to the tree where he sits, who, seeing them coming, removes further to another, and after that to another, still calling them by the same note; whereby it has happened that many in seeking to find the bird have lost themselves. The application is easy. For the things of this world invite, and allure, and promise much

content. Lo, Here it is; and lo, There it is; but no body could ever light of it there; for when one comes near them, the deceitful birds take to themselves wings, and fly away. So the wisest of men tells us in plain words, Eccl. v. 10. *He who loveth silver shall not be satisfied*, &c. And concerning pleasure, the same wisdom said, that It is madness; and of mirth, What doth it? *Eccl.* ii. 2. And concerning honour, he thought the same thing; for *all that comes*, says he, *is vanity.*

This meditation is capable of much enlargement, but it does not need it. Therefore, I will dismiss it, and consider further, whether those things be indeed riches, pleasures, and honours, which are called by those names? I suppose that these things of the world are not only empty and unsatisfying, and therefore unfit to be the object of our love, but that they are deceitful, in not being what we call them, as well as in not giving what we expect from them. Shall these sorry things deserve the name of riches, honour, and pleasure, that are full of poverty, disgrace, and bitterness? Can I be properly said to be rich, when with my riches I am poor; or honourable, when with my honours I am the more abject and slavish; or a man of pleasures, when with my pleasures I am the sadder? And is it not thus?

The true measure of riches is, not how much the more one has, but how much the less he wants; for riches were not intended only that we might have more, but that nothing should be wanting. Now consider that famous man in the Gospel, for example, whether he was the richer or the poorer for that plentiful crop he reaped.

This increase made him solicitous and sleepless, made him more indigent then he was before; and was it not poverty then? For now the text tells us, he wants bigger barns, consequently a great many workmen to build him more, servants and cattle to manage his husbandry. And I pray what can poverty itself do more than make a man want? I will suppose a poor man in the common sense to be made rich; well, now he wants men and arms to defend his riches, servants to manage them, a retinue to wait on him; now he wants a stately house, and that wants stately furniture. He wants many other things, and whose things want many other things still; so that the poverty is mightily increased by the man's being enriched. And is it not thus with honours too? Was not Haman base and vile with all honour, who was subject to Mordecai, a captive, a slave? If it be said it was by accident; I answer, that all honour lies perfectly at the mercy of the people, they kill or save by the turning of a thumb, as they did in the Arena of old.

It is ill provided for proud men, whose greatness depends on a small matter, which is in the power of the meanest man to deny. And to be a servant to so many men, and those of the meanest too, methinks is a great reproach. And as for pleasure, I doubt not but that honest, self-denying Uriah had more satisfaction of mind in not going home to his wife, than David had in fetching her home to him; his denying of pleasure was pleasant, whereas the other's pleasure was painful and shameful.

And wilt thou, O my soul, be imposed on? Wilt thou be so childish as to pursue a painted and gadding butterfly, which either thou canst not catch, or it will weary thee to catch it; or it will at last shame thee of the pains and weariness that thou hast been at in catching it, when thou seest it will not answer thy expectations? Nay, worse, wilt thou follow a falsity, a delusion, a shadow instead of a substance, a name instead of a thing? Wilt thou travel all the day in pursuit of a notion, and at last it will prove nothing but a fallacy?

Is it such an admirable achievement, after all thy pains, and ploddings, and hazards of health and ease, and soul, and all, to be falsely called rich or honourable? Nay, nay, for stark shame lose not the substance for the shadow, and yet not get that neither. Reckon that true riches stand rather in not wanting any thing, than in having much; and not wanting, depends on not desiring; lessen thy desires, and thou art truly and compendiously become rich. If thou desirest many worldly things to make thee happy, thou dost both miss of thy happiness (which these things can never afford,) and losest a great part of thyself too in the inquiry; for look how many desires do distract thee, so many bits and parcels of thyself are wanting; every concupiscence runs away with a piece of thee. To think to be made happy by the addition of mere worldly things, is as if one should attempt to make an entire garment of patches.

MEDITATION XXXVII.

From the consideration of the nature of love.

When I begin to think of the nature of love, I see a wide field open, wherein I might either tire or lose myself. I will therefore confine my mind to the meditation of the nature of love, as it is giving, transforming, uniting, and subjecting. These are four famous properties of it, to give away the mind to the object, to assimilate it to it, to unite it, and to subject it thereunto.

From every one of which will arise a strong dissuasive from the love of the world.

He who loves gives; and what does he give? He gives his heart, he gives himself. The text seems to justify this notion, that predominant loving is a giving away of the heart to any object; *My son, give me thy heart.* He who predominantly loves God, gives him his heart; and it is true, on the other hand, that the covetous man is given to the world, and the sensualist is given to pleasures; *Anima est ubi amat, non ubi animat*, [the soul is where it loves, not where it animates.] The soul that loves, sojourns abroad all the while, and is another's, not his own. He who loves God, gives himself to God, and dwelleth in him; which giving away of ourselves is most advantageous. For in lieu of this poor gift, ourselves, we receive God, who is infinitely better than ten thousand selves. But he that by love gives himself to the world, parts with the best he has, even himself, for nothing. He gives himself

to that which can give him nothing back again, cannot so much as love him. In which respect I hesitate not to affirm, that the covetous man is the greatest prodigal in the world; he parts with that which is most precious, for no price at all. For, to allude to our Saviour, he hath nothing in exchange for his soul.

Again, let us a little consider the assimilating nature of love. As he that looks into a glass, even by looking into it, makes a face therein; so he that loves, even by loving, contracts a similitude. No man loves God, but he forthwith necessarily becomes God-like. How precious and honourable must this love be then, that makes this blessed transformation? And how vile and dishonourable is that worldly love, that transforms man into money, nay into muck! The poets tell of a covetous king that turned all he touched into gold; but lo here a stranger sight, the covetous worldling, turning even himself into gold by loving it. Wouldst thou be content, O man, that God should turn thee into gold or silver, into house or land? Why then wilt thou make this voluntary transformation of thyself? And yet so it is, thou becomest the thing that thou lovest; even as a lump of brass, cast and carved into the shape of a man, is said to be a man; but cut the effigies of a beast on it, and it will be called a lion or a dog.

Yea, more than so, the nature of love is not only assimilating but uniting. The soul of man is no otherwise united to any object but by love; this makes him as much one with God, as he is capable, if God be his best beloved object; and

it makes him one with the world, if that be his darling; even one with a harlot, if he be by love joined unto her. The particles of some worms cut off, seek to be united to the head; sure I am that man, (who is called a worm and no man,) being by his apostacy cut off from God, ought ever to be inquiring after his original, and seeking to be re-united to the blessed object from which at first he is so unhappily divorced.

In a word, the nature of all created love is to subject the heart to the beloved object. *Qui aliquo fruitur, ei necessse est ut per amorem subdatur.* He that loves God above all, confesses that he needs him above all; and seeks to be made happy, in conjunction with something more excellent than himself is; which is but reasonable, and indeed honourable. And so he that loves the world predominantly, proclaims his need of, and dependance on the world, in the enjoyment of which he expects himself to be happy; which is unreasonable and shameful. The covetous rich man does not so properly possess the world, as indeed he is possessed by it; the world has the command of his heart, therefore it is his master; and he is the worst of slaves, as giving himself into a voluntary bondage, and that to the vilest and meanest of masters. What place in the creation shall I assign to that man that loves the lowest things; for by loving, he makes himself lower than they; and it will puzzle all philosophy to tell where to place that man, that is lower than the lowest.

Shake off these shameful fetters, O my soul; burst this yoke. Thou art called to liberty, renounce this abominable servitude, and reckon that if for an hand-maid to be heir to her mis-

tress, is a matter of pride, for a mistress to enslave herself to her hand-maid, is matter of shame and reproach. The gracious Creator hath placed thee in a noble degree and rank of the creatures, the lines are fallen to thee in a good place; do not wilfully degrade thyself by forsaking thy station and thrusting thyself down below the lowest, to thy eternal disparagement and amazement. Lest whilst thou standest in a mixture of disdain, and ire, beholding the mighty Nebuchadnezzar herding himself with the oxen; thou plunge thyself into a more dishonourable condition than this, and suffer thyself to be ridden by thy own beast.

MEDITATION XXXVIII.

From the consideration of the nature of the love of the world, idolatrous and adulterous.

Having briefly considered what the world is, and what love is, I will now put them together, and a little consider what worldly love is. And indeed I cannot think of any thing abominable, but I find it to be that. Methinks I hear the pathetic words of the blessed one, sounding in my ears, *Oh do not that abominable thing that I hate*, (Jer. xliv. 4.) It seems that all sin is abominable and hated of God's soul. But if one thing may be said to be more abominable than another, I doubt not but predominant worldly love is the most abominable of all things; as having in it the nature of all those things, which are of all sober judges accounted most abominable. I will con-

fine myself to five or six of the worst that I can think of. And here I will begin this black roll with idolatry.

This is confessed by all Christians to be an abominable thing, insomuch that that very part of the Christian world which we most suspect of it, are as studious to excuse it, as they are bold to commit it. And there is a great deal of reason why all men professing the knowledge of the true God, should abominate idolatry, when they hear him in his word so expressly charging the world against it, so terribly threatening the commission of it, and read what lamentable devastations he made among the Jews because of it; which the prophet excuses by a strange expression, *The Lord could no longer bear, because of their idolatry*, Jer. xliv. 22. But as abominable as it is, the love of the world is in it. What the apostle says of one branch of it, by the same argument, that covetousness is idolatry; pride and sensuality are no better. The highest act of worship is love; consequently, he who loves the praise of men, more than the praise of God, that is, a lover of pleasures more than of God, is a downright idolater. Gold and silver need not to be made into images, to be objects of admiration. He who loves and delights, and trusts in them chiefly, has given the worship peculiar to God to them, and made them his god already. Idols may be, and commonly are set up, as properly in the heart as in houses, *Ezek.* xiv. 3. and idolatry as well committed, by the inclinations of the will, as by the bending of the knee. There cannot be more palpable idolatry in the world, than

making that a God to one's self, which is none. Is not the sensualist an idolater in the most proper speech, whose belly is his god, as the apostle phraseth it? By the like propriety of speech, one may say of the proud gallant, that he makes his back his god; nay, an horse, an hawk, or an hound, may be as truly an idol to a Christian, as a calf is to an Egyptian.

A second abominable thing that I think of, is adultery. Whatever favourable opinion this wicked and wanton age has entertained of this vice, I am sure the holy God accounts it abominable, and ordained in his commonwealth of the Jews, that the adulterers should be stoned to death. Such is the opinion that God has of adultery, that he most usually, by his prophets, compares that incomparable sin of idolatry to it, and calls it *going a whoring after other gods.* It must needs be a foul pattern by which that monster of idolatry is drawn.

And is not the love of the world adultery? Is not the heart of man as much dedicate and due to God, as any man's wife is peculiar to him? Do men justly complain of great wrong done to them, and may not God as justly complain of the alienation of hearts? May not God reasonably be offended that such a vile thing as mundanes should be his rival, and defile the heart of man; which he esteems his greatest jewel. It is plain by the judgment of the great Searcher of hearts, that she who lusts after another man, more than her own husband, is a whore, and has already committed adultery with him in her heart. It must needs be, that the soul that lusts after and cleaves to

any object more than to God, (to whom souls are most nearly related, and to whom they are most firmly bound,) is abominably unchaste and adulterous in her loves. Souls have no way of playing the harlot but by mis-loving; and by how much the meaner the object of their love is, so much the grosser and more shameful their adultery. So that the soul prostituting itself to the world is not only adulterous, but indeed Sodomitical in this conjunction. For it is all one with lying down before a beast, which is forbidden by the law, abhorred of nature, and damned by the gentile theology, under the fable of *Pasiphae* and her bull, and their monstrous offspring the *Minotaur, veneris monumenta nefandæ.*

MEDITATION XXXIX.

Of the blasphemy and sacrilege of worldly love.

A THIRD abominable thing that I think of, is blasphemy. To speak evil of God injuriously, reproachfully of the Deity, may justly be accounted horrible among the servants of the true God; when it was judged abominable even by the heathens, whose gods themselves were abominable. Paul's companions had like to have been pulled in pieces by the zealous Ephesians, for disparaging Diana; and the only way that the town clerk could take to appease the multitude, was to tell them whatsoever people said of her, Diana was a very brave goddess; and to deny that Paul's companions were blasphemers of her;

for he knew that if such a horrible thing as blasphemy were proved against them, the people would not have staid for any judicial sentence to be passed on them. Now there is blasphemy of the heart as well as of the tongue. So the fool blasphemes, who says in his heart there is no God; and so do all they that either ascribe to God what he is not, as ignorance or injustice, or deny to him what he is, Omniscience and Omnipotence; or else ascribe that to the creature, which only and of right belongs to him. Thus every idolater, who gives divine worship to a creature, is a manifest blasphemer of God; and so are all predominant lovers of the world, who, by the predominant pursuit of the world, do declare they expect happiness from the creature, which is only to be found in God and in the enjoyment of him. It may seem harsh, when spoken in plain words, that every covetous, proud, and sensual soul is a blasphemer; but there is nothing more true nor scarce plainer. I do not speak of any single act of blasphemy that these worldlings are guilty of, but indeed they live in a constant and continued strain of blasphemy. Is it not evident that all these men seek happiness, rest, satisfaction, in the great abundance of worldly things? It is obvious to every one, that they do insatiably pursue them; there can be no cause of this assigned, but that they fancy and promise to themselves some satisfaction and happiness in the enjoyment of them. And is not this plainly to ascribe to the creature, that felicitating and satisfying virtue, which individually belongs to the Creator? Is it not to give the glory and es-

sence, and incommunicable attributes of God to another? Does not he disparage a fountain of living waters, who repairs to a broken cistern, to quench his thirst? Does not he disparage the nature of bread, who passes it by, and seeks to fill his belly with husks? That which is a disparagement to these, if it be committed against God, is blasphemy. He is the only root and centre of souls, and to take up in any thing below him, as an ultimate rest and satisfaction, does highly dishonour him, and plainly blaspheme him. How justly may it be answered to this worldly crew, at the last day, when, finding their miserable disappointment, they shall seek to enter into everlasting rest; I know you not, you have received your consolation, you have had your reward; in your life time, you received your good things. Get ye to your gods therefore of gold, of silver, and such other worldly deities, to which all along you blasphemously ascribed a filling and satisfying virtue.

The poor woman in the Gospel, who had spent all her living on physicians, and could get no cure, was indeed afterwards admitted to a touch of the hem of the garment of Jesus, and healed. But they who spend all their heart on the world, seeking for rest in things that cannot afford it, shall not find it, when they come to seek it where it is. No, no, it is just that they who blasphemously make this world their god, should be disposed of with the god of this world.

The fourth abominable thing that I think of, is sacrilege, or a robbing of God. How abominable a thing this is, one may easily discern by those

pathetic words of God himself, *Mal.* iii. 8. where he asks as it were with wonderment, *Will a man rob God?* It can scarcely be thought that there should be any such bold villany in the nature of things. The heathens accounted it a fearful thing to rob their gods, who indeed possessed nothing. Every body knows how Prometheus in their fables, was fastened to Mount Caucasus, and had a vulture perpetually assigned to feed on his liver, for defrauding Jupiter at a feast, putting him off with bones covered with fat, when he got the best morsels to his own trencher, and stealing fire from heaven. This sacrilege Jupiter did so much resent, as Lucian somewhere tells the story, that he thought instead of being bound to Mount Caucasus, he deserved the whole mountain to be thrown on him, and instead of one vulture, he deserved sixteen to torment him.

Are they esteemed to rob God, who withheld tithes and offerings from him; and shall not they be much rather so esteemed, who deny him their hearts? Our hearts are due to God, he requires them; *My son, give me thy heart.* This is his great commandment, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart.* The heart of man is most sacred, the very temple, the living temple of the living God; and if it be accounted abominable sacrilege, to steal holy vessels out of the temple, what shall we call it, when we steal the temple itself? So do all they who withhold their hearts from God, and bestow them on the world.

MEDITATION XL.

Of the ingratitude and perjury of worldly love.

The next abominable thing that I can think of, is ingratitude; a thing so abominable, that the very heathen, by the light of nature, every where cry out upon it with the sharpest invectives imaginable. I need name none of them, having once quoted that famous aphorism of their's, *Qui ingratum dixerit omnia dixit*, Call a man ungrateful, and you call him all that is naught. But yet there are degrees here, and some kind of ingratitude is more abominable than others. Of all the kinds, ingratitude towards God is the worst; and of all ingratitude towards God, the giving away of the heart is the worst; and to give it to such a vile thing, a hurtful thing, and his enemy too, makes it still worse. God has given us all the good we have, yea, even that good that is given us by our parents, tutors, patrons, benefactors, he is the doer of it. And for all this he looks for nothing from us but that we should love him. And is it not monstrous injustice and ingratitude, to deny him that? He gave us these very hearts; and shall we go and give them to his and our own professed enemy? Talk no more of the abominableness of the graceless lads that killed their master with their pen-knives, of Absalom taking up arms against his father, of rebellious subjects pursuing their king to death, by those very swords that he put into their hands, of the churl that denied a meal's meat to him who had kept

all his flock in the wilderness; one covetous man outdoes them all, and every predominant lover of the world, who denies his heart to the God who gave it him, is more abominable than all they. It was a very cutting reflection that our Saviour made upon the ungrateful people, among whom he conversed, *I have done many good works among you, for which of these is it, that ye stone me?* And what shall he be able to answer, to whom the Father of mercies shall put this question; I have made thee what thou art, I have given thee what thou hast; for which of these mercies is it, that thou hatest me? If it be answered, nay, Lord, wherein did I hate thee? It will soon be replied, to the eternal silencing of the ungrateful wretch, in as much as thou didst not love me, thou hatedst me, for if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. But I will adjourn the further prosecution of this to some following Meditations, concerning motives to the love of God, and consider the last abominable thing, which the love of the world is, and that is perjury.

The Jews of our Saviour's time had very broad consciences, and many foul things they made a shift to swallow, such as revenge, hatred of enemies, neglect of poor parents, and the like; yet perjury was such a morsel as they could never get down; though they had made void many of the commands of God, yet for stark shame they left this standing in its full force, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform to thy Lord thy vows. What opinion the heathen had of perjury, appears by the strange punishments

that they say the gods inflicted upon Laomedon, king of Troy, for falsifying the promissory oath that he had made to Neptune and Apollo; which vengeance did not only light on him and his age, but reached unto posterity. So that many years after, they cried out, *Laomedonteæ luimus perjuria Trojæ.* [Troy feels the perjury of Laomedon.] Herod, could digest murder and incest (hard morsels one would think) yet hesitated at perjury; though the oath was a rash one, and made but to a girl, and that upon no valuable consideration neither, yet his stomach (as vitiated as it was) so nauseated perjury, that he would perform it. It seems it was accounted by them an abominable blasphemy, to call God to witness to a lie, to make truth itself a liar; but let the promise be made to whom it would, how much more abominable must it needs be, when that promise is made to God? That is at the same time, to defraud and blaspheme the Majesty of Heaven. And so do all they who solemnly, in the presence of God, covenant and swear to fight under his banner against the world, and afterwards turn to the world, and enter into a covenant of friendship with that which they had once declared their deadly enemy. Mercury in the fable, resented it grievously, that Battus should betray him to himself; *Et me mihi perfide prodis, me mihi prodis.* [Me to myself, perfidious, thou betrayest.] Certainly, a more intolerable affront cannot be put upon the Majesty of Heaven, than that men should swear by him, to him, and then forsake him; making themselves at once guilty of fraud and blasphemy, which all the lovers of the world do.

If now there be any thing abominable in idolatry, adultery, blasphemy, sacrilege, ingratitude, perjury, the predominant love of the world must needs be abominable even to amazement, which is really all these; and what needs, what can be said more to dissuade us from it?

O merciful God, who alone canst effectually deal with the hearts of men, persuade us thoroughly of the undefiling nature of thy love, that we may make it our great study, to keep ourselves unspotted from the world.

MEDITATION XLI.

General motives to the love of God.

And now address thyself, O my soul, to the last and sweetest part of thy work, to meditate of some powerful motives to inflame thyself, and the rest of the benumbed world, with the love of God. Strengthen me, O my God, this once; not that I may be revenged on, but that I may perform the greatest kindness to thine enemies, by rescuing them out of their miserable bondage, and enlarging their souls in the most pure and generous love of thee! I let down my net once more, not without thy command. Oh that by thy gracious assistance and blessing, I may inclose a number of souls; and translate those, who all their days have swum in earthly delights, and in the brackish sea of this world, into the sweet rivers of pleasures that are at thy right hand; or rather into the pure fountain of peace.

and joy and pleasure, which thou art, for evermore.

And here, methinks, I have the whole world, and all the individuals therein, thronging about me, each offering its vote, each offering itself an orator, to plead the cause of God. The holy psalmist, in the 148th psalm, calls on the whole creation, heaven, and the heaven of heavens, and the waters that be above the heavens, the earth, and the deeps, and all the inhabitants of all those; angels, and the hosts of God, the lights of heaven, vapours, and flying flowls of the air, all men great and small, young and old, beasts and cattle, and creeping things, and all vegetables; I say, he calls on them to praise and celebrate the Lord. But, methinks, I hear all these calling on me, and all mankind, to love the Lord, and to delight ourselves greatly in our God. For certainly there is nothing in the creation but does plainly declare the loveliness of God, and whatsoever does so, does as good as preach and say, *O love the Lord, ye children of men.*

But I see I shall lose myself in this immensity; I will therefore confine myself to some few topics, from whence to bring arguments and motives to the love of God.

The nature of our Christian profession, the nature of our own souls, the nature of God, the nature of love, the nature of the love of God, will furnish us with powerful motives to the love of God; as all these, with the nature of the world and of worldly love, have furnished us with dissuasives from the love of the world. For

there is as much excellency in the nature of God, and of the love of God, to recommend them, as there is unsuitableness and unsatisfyingness in the world, or abominableness in worldly love, to disparage them. It is no hard thing for a devout mind to bring mighty motives to the love of God from the same heads, (the argument being a little altered,) from which the dissuasives from the love of the world were brought. As, for example, if we should therefore not love the world, because it is unsuitable and insufficient to us, and not that which it seems to be, then we should therefore love God, because of his infinite fulness, and because he is the only substantial and agreeable good. If we should therefore not love the world, because by loving, we give, we assimilate, we unite, we subject ourselves to the world: If this be the nature of love, then what can be more excellent and advantageous to us than the love of God? If we should therefore not love the world, because the love of the world is abominable, idolatrous, adulterous, blasphemous, sacrilegious, ungrateful and perjurous: The love of God being, on the contrary, excellent and divine, pure, chaste, just, ingenuous, and reasonable, ought mightily to allure and attract us unto itself. And so of the rest. But here also I should be tempted to be too large; I will therefore limit myself to a few considerations, which I have found most powerful over my own soul. Oh, would it might please God to bless them with a mighty influence, that they may come to the hearts of those into whose hands they may fall.

MEDITATION XLII.

A particular motive to the love of God.

First, I am wont to consider that God loves us best of any one. The law of nature suggests, yea, dictates and requires this, that we love those who love us; our Saviour takes it for granted that all men do this, because the worst of men do it; yea, the very beasts do it, *Sævis inter se convenit ursis*, [The savage bears agree among themselves;] nay, it seems that there is a kind of an agreement in hell, and an order and amity among the devils, else their kingdom could not stand. If two cannot walk together except they be agreed, how much less can four thousand (for so many was a Roman legion in our Saviour's days) dwell together in one man without some mutual kindness. The nature of love is sociable, it can endure any thing but solitude; this it can no more endure, than the wind can endure to be, and not to blow. Now what more proper object of love can there be, than one who loves us, or a thing that is our own. No one is our own so properly as he who loves us. I am more truly possessed of a friend who loves me, than of a child that I carry in mine arms, or wife that I lay in my bosom, that cares not for me. Of all the world therefore God is most our's, because he loves us best. The love that comes from above is strong. We commonly observe that the love that comes down from parents upon their children, is stronger than that which rises up

from the children to their parents. An arrow falling from on high, wounds deeper. What deep impressions then in the hearts of men, should the arrows of Love make, that are shot from above the highest heavens? It is truly said, That God hates nothing of what he hath made. His hatred of the wicked and of the devils, if we understand it aright, is not so much his hatred of them, as their hatred of him. There is no such thing as hatred in the pure nature of God; his name is Love, and certainly he is named according to his nature. But speaking after the manner of men, he is said to hate evil doers, only to denote a contrariety of his nature to sin and wickedness; as if one should say, fire hates water, and light hates darkness. It is a passage of St. Bernard, somewhere in his Meditations, *Diligo te, Deus, plusquam mea, plusquam meos, plusquam me,* [I love thee, O God, more than my goods, more than my friends, more than myself.] That was a pure strain of devotion, and to be imitated by every soul of man that understands the nature of his happiness, and relation wherein he stands to God. But if we alter the grammar of it, it is as true divinity still, *Deus diligit me plusquam mea, plusquam mei, plusquam ego,* God loves us better than all our friends love us, better than we ourselves love ourselves. Of all our friends, our relations are supposed to love us best; and of all relations, our parents. The love of God towards us, therefore, is compared to the love that a father bears to his son who serves him, and a mother her to sucking child. But it infinitely excels these; for what wretched mortal can

pretend to love with such strength and wisdom as God loves. If we who are by nature evil and impotent parents, can love our children tenderly, how much more doth our heavenly Father? It is our Saviour's own argument, and it concludes as strongly concerning loving, as concerning giving. And if giving good things be an argument of love, God loves us better than our parents, for he has given us much more than our parents could; for he hath given us noble souls, and his Son to redeem them, yea, and he gave us those very parents themselves, who give us any good thing.

He loves us better than we love ourselves. I am much taken with the expression of the satyrist, (speaking of the gods, and their providence towards men,) *Charior est ipsis homo quam sibi*, [Man dearer is to them than to himself.] God's love towards us is more pure and wise than our own. He loves us so well, that he will deny us things hurtful to us, though we pray for them; so well, that he will afflict us for our good, though it be sore against our wills; so well, that he will remove us out of this world that we are so fond of, into a much better, which we, poor souls, have little mind to.

MEDITATION XLIII.

A further motive to the love of God.

Secondly, I consider, that I am beholden to God, and it is by him that I am able to love any thing; therefore I ought to love him above all

things. The bare possession of any thing, is not the enjoyment of it. It is not by having, but by loving things, that we enjoy them. If mere possession were enough, the sparrows had enjoyed the altar of God as much as David, and the owls had been as happy in the full barns of the Gospel rich man, as he himself. Light is sweet, but it is to them who see it; and so are meats and drinks, and perfumes, but it is only to them who can taste and smell. Nebuchadnezzar, in his distraction, when the heart of a man was taken from him, had no more enjoyment of his princely treasures, than a jackdaw or a magpie has of a thimble, or a bodkin, that they have hoarded up. Beauty is a pretty thing, but if there were no looking glasses in the world to represent it, the ladies would not be so proud of it as they are, nor dote on themselves as they do. I dare appeal to the greatest mammonist in the world, whether he would think it worth his care and toil to covet and scrape together great masses of money, if he were sure he should be deprived of the power of taking any pleasure in it. Certainly if it be vanity and an evil disease, that a man should have riches, wealth and honour, *and no power to eat thereof*, Eccl. vi. 2. it must needs be worse to have these things, and not be able so much as to love them, or esteem them lovely. Suppose God should give a man all the conveniences, advantages and ornaments imaginable, and should annex this only curse to them, that he should not be able, in any degree, to take any pleasure in them; I wonder who would account this man happy! Sure I am he himself would

not. Is it not God who gives us those affections and that power, by which we love any thing; ought we not to love him above all things, by whom it is that we love all things? It was a reasonable expostulation of the prophet, *He who hath made the ear, shall he not hear?* And is it not as reasonable to ask, He who hath made the ear, shall he not be heard? He who hath created the affection of love in us, shall not he be loved? I had rather never to have been, than not to have been a loving creature. Having is nothing without enjoying, and there is no enjoying without loving. If a man have ever so beautiful, sweet, chaste, virtuous a wife, if he cannot love her, it destroys all the pleasure of relation; *Etiam medio de fonte leporum surgit amari aliquid*, [With all his joys some bitter thing is mixed.] Now certainly if I be beholden to God only for all the pleasure that I take in my wife and children, who hath given me power to love them, it is highly reasonable that I should love him above them. Tell me, thou man of pleasures, is there any pleasure in meats, sports, in wine or woman? That very pleasure that thou takest in them, ought in reason to call thee off from the intemperate and unchaste use of them, because it is inconsistent with the love of God, who gives thee the power of perceiving and delighting in even thy impure pleasures. The very pleasures of the table, and of the bed, do preach the predominant love of God. And tell me, thou mammonist, dost thou love to look on thy gold and silver, dost thou take pleasure in beholding them with thine eyes? Is it not highly reasonable thou

shouldst love God, who hath enabled thee to love gold? The power of loving is from God, therefore he ought to be the principal object of our love.

MEDITATION XLIV.

A further motive to the love of God.

Thirdly, I consider that whatever is lovely in the creature, is from God. Jesus saith to Philip, desiring a sight of the Father, *Have I been so long with you, and sayest thou, show us the Father?* What an impertinent request is it, for a man that has so long conversed with the Son, the express image of the Father, to desire to see the Father! I may with reason wonder, and say the same concerning every lovely object in creation; have we seen so many beautiful objects, and tasted so many pleasant things, and can we not in all those see the beauty, and taste the sweetness of the Creator? Why, that whereby any thing is lovely is of God. *Deus est quodcunq; vides*, [God is every thing you behold;] and so we cannot miss of tasting the divinity in every pleasant morsel, of smelling it in every flower, of beholding it in every sweet face and feature: created good being nothing else but a reflection of the uncreated Goodness. The wit and ingenuity for which thou lovest thyself, the beauty and symmetry for which thou lovest thy wife, or any other woman, the deliciousness for which thou lovest meat, or drink, or music, the health and honour

for which thou so much dotest on the world, are but drops issuing out of that immense ocean of wisdom, beauty, sweetness and perfection, which God is.

To speak properly, the excellencies which we see in creatures, are not the perfections of this or that particular being, but the perfections of God; for they are nothing but what he made them; and it is by stamping his own beauty and goodness on them, that they are many of them in any degree good and beautiful; and indeed not only the perfections and ornaments of every particular being are of God, but the very thing itself. Because he is, therefore we are; for in him we live and have our being. In spite of all grammar, I cannot but sometimes ask myself this strange question, where was I before I was? A little philosophy will solve it; whatever there was of me, as I was future, and to exist, was in God; *Ibi nobilissimum mei exemplar*, [There was my most noble pattern.] All things are in God, I among the rest. *Age, anima, repete illud unde prodiisti, unde fuisti*, [Come then, my soul, seek that, from which thou didst proceed, and whence thou wast.] There is a great deal of reason why I should love God more than myself, who is the original and womb of my being; of whom it is, not only that I am thus accomplished, but that I am at all. And if more than myself, then certainly more than all other things whose being and excellencies are derivative as well as my own. The apostle John argues strongly, 1 John v. 1. *Every one that loveth him that begat, loveth him that is begotten of*

him. Methinks I may invert the order of the words, and argue with no less clearness, (for the same spirit of God justifies this argumentation also,) If any one love that which is begotten, he ought to love him that begat. If any one love any lovely creature, he ought much more to admire the Creator. If a man delight in the picture of his friend, and love to contemplate it in his chamber, how much more will he love his friend, the original and prototype, when he hath him in his arms? Arise, O my soul, dwell not on the lowest round of the ladder, but spring up by the several creatures, as by so many steps, till thou arrive at the very Original of beauty and being.

MEDITATION XLV.

Further motives to the love of God.

And now pursue this meditation a little, and add hereunto, that if all the loveliness of the several creatures be by way of communication from God, he himself must needs be infinitely more lovely, that blessed supreme Being, from whom these excellencies are derived, must needs himself be more excellent. The sweetness of the stream must needs fall short of the sweetness of the fountain; as it is true, *Nihil dat quod non habet,* [Nothing gives what it does not possess,] so it is also, *Nihil dat omne quod habet,*[Nothing gives all it possesses.] All created perfections do flow forth from God, as from an infinite fountain, by way of redundancy; how inconceivably infinite must the fountain fulness then be!

God hath given power to kings to kill the body; who would not fear them? He has given them authority that they can say to this man, come, and to another do this; and who would not obey them? How much rather, then, ought we to fear him who can cast both soul and body into hell; how much rather ought we to be obedient to the supreme authority of Heaven, be in subjection to the Father of spirits, and live? In like manner may any devout mind reason, God hath endowed the souls of men with wisdom, ingenuity, good nature, gracious disposition. Who can but love such lovely objects as these; nay, rather, who will not love the infinite wisdom, benignity, and holiness, from which these are but little emanations, and to which they do not bear so much proportion as the small dust of the balance does to the vast body of the earth.

Why stand ye admiring us, or the miracle, said the two disciples? Admire the divine Jesus, by whose power these mighty miracles are wrought. And why stand ye gazing on me, may all created beauty say, pass on to the great Exemplar, contemplate, admire, and love the ravishing unspotted beauty, in comparison of whom I am mere vileness and deformity. And why stand ye gazing on me, may all created strength, may the behemoth and leviathan say, pass on from the chief of the ways of God, to God himself; contemplate the Almighty, adore and reverence the absolute, indefeatable, uncontrollable, unchangeable, eternal Being, compared with whom our strength is as straw, and all our might but as rotten wood. And why stand ye drawing

at me, may all created sweetness, may the honey, and the honey comb say; go from the cistern to the Fountain, to the uncreated sweetness, entertain yourselves, and fill your souls with the heavenly manna, in comparison of which Fountain, all the rivers of created pleasures are as the waters of Marah; in comparison of which manna, all created entertainments are rather husks than bread, fitter for swine than souls.

And why dote ye on me, may all worldly glory, may Solomon in all his glory say, if you will aspire, let nothing terminate your covetousness or ambition below the Supreme Goodness, and the inaccessible glory, the glory of the Highest, who hath stamped some little of himself upon me, whereby I become desirable or glorious; but in comparison of whose brightness, I am a dark shadow, and a total eclipse.

MEDITATION XLVI.

A further motive to the love of God.

Fifthly, consider, that to love God, is to gain God. It may justly make one wonder to see men take such pains to gain the world, and yet be so indifferently affected to the enjoyment of God himself. Rising up early, and lying down late, and eating the bread of sorrows, describes but a little of that pains and solicitousness which men use for gaining the world, in comparison of that compassing of sea and land, running of strange hazards, adventuring health and life, soul

and all, in pursuit of wealth and honour, which we may every where discern among the greedy merchants, and ambitious courtiers and warriors of the world. And after all this, it proves that they seek but a very mean thing, and that they gain but a little of that which they seek, that they are not satisfied with that which they gain.

It is worth an age of pains to gain the creature, yea a small handful of it, yea, and such an handful too, as is gone as soon as it is well gained; and can any man that is master of his reason, choose but think it much more worthy of all possible endeavours to gain the Creator, and make the Supreme Good his own? Our Saviour seems to make a supposition of a thing not to be supposed, when he speaks of a single man gaining the whole world; (like which there are many hyperbolical suppositions made in the Holy Scripture;) But the gaining of God is no hyperbolical supposition, but a real proposal. It is sincerely propounded to the sons of men, and if they fail of it, it is their own fault and folly. It hath pleased God so to constitute the rational soul, that nothing besides himself can be the happiness of it. It is impossible in the very nature of the thing, that any thing below infinite truth and goodness, should satisfy the understanding and will of man, or that the same should be any otherwise perfected, but in the possession of this blessed object. It must needs follow, then, that he is willing to be enjoyed; else he had been cruel to the souls of men, in giving them faculties which should never be perfected, and appetites that should always be craving and never satisfied.

It must needs be that the Supreme Good is most communicative of himself, and that he who every where commands us to give to them who ask us, and not to turn away from them who would borrow of us, must himself be infinitely willing to be found of them who seek him. This being certain, it will as certainly follow that the loving of God, is the enjoyment of him. *Dilige et frueris*, [Love, and thou enjoyest.] It is love that assimilates and unites, and makes this blessed object our own. Solomon tells us, *That he that loveth silver, shall not be satisfied with silver;* yea, it is true also, that he who loveth silver, oftentimes does not so much as possess silver. Poor men may be covetous as well as rich, and there are many in the world, no doubt, whose hearts mightily hanker after the world, who yet miss of it; who pursue this shadow, and it flies from them. But no man ever set his heart on God and was disappointed of the enjoyment of him. Though many love riches who never come to be rich, and beautiful mistresses who are never admitted to their embraces, yea, and the admirers of their own beauty are miserably disappointed, (Narcissus like, they cannot so much as obtain a kiss of that sweet mouth they so fondly contemplate in the glass,) having no advantage of their own fair faces, save the beholding of them with their eyes; yet it is far otherwise with the lovers of God. This most beautiful and blessed object envies no good thing, no not himself to his lovers and friends. As the benign sun envies not, denies not his precious light, no not to the meanest inhabitant of the

earth who will but look at him; (see him, and you enjoy him;) so neither does the Father of light, deny himself to any who do but heartily desire him; love him, and you enjoy him. For what other way can there be supposed to be of enjoying God? Every man is alike nigh to God, yea, and the devils as nigh as men. Set aside the loving of God, and the meanest man in the world is as much akin to him as the mightiest, and the apostate spirits as near to him as his menial servants, the courtiers of heaven. If we could suppose an unloving soul to be admitted into heaven, and to be as nigh the throne of God as the angels are, this very paradise would be a purgatory to him, and the bosom of Abraham a bed of thorns.

Oh how blessed, and yet how easy a thing is it to enjoy God? Love him, and he is your own. If kingdoms could be got with loving, what man would not be a prince? If great fortunes could be obtained by being desired, who would not be sure of a rich match? If the mere setting one's heart on silver and gold, would make them to increase, the prophesy would certainly fail, of having the poor always with us. God is more easily got than gold. Believe in Jesus, and you have him. Love God, and you are possessed of him.

Droop not, thou meanest, obscurest, poorest of the children of men; come, lift up thy head and take courage. I show thee a way, a certain way, an easy way, how thou mayest be as excellent, as rich, as honourable, as any of the princes of the earth, as the angels of heaven. Love the Father; for if any man love the Father and

the Son, they will come unto him and make their abode with him. Good God, what honour and happiness is this that thou bestowest on thy saints!

MEDITATION XLVII.

A further motive to the love of God.

To this consideration might well be added, that the lover of God in gaining God, gains all other things. *Habet omnia qui habet habentem omnia*, [He has all things, who has the possessor of them all.] *All things are your's*, says the apostle, to the lovers of God; *and all other things shall be added to you*, says Christ, to the seekers of the kingdom of God. Love God, and you gain all other things in him and with him. It was a generous speech of the Roman general, when they offered him great treasures to be friends with him? "I matter not your gifts, (said he,) I had rather command a people, that have all those riches, than have them myself." If it should be supposed, that a man should enjoy God, and nothing of the world with him, yet it were a more excellent and happy condition to enjoy him, who hath and indeed is all things, than to enjoy all other things without him. The lovers of God are sure of enjoying other things with him; the things even of this world shall be added to them, so far as is convenient for them. However, though they should live and die as poor as Job, when he was at the poorest; and as forlorn

as Lazarus, yet they enjoy all things in God. For whatever is truly sweet, pleasant, lovely, beautiful in the whole creation, is more excellently enjoyed in God, than as it lies scattered up and down among the creatures, *Dulcius*, (yea and *plenius* too,) *ex ipso fonte bibuntur aquæ*, [Sweeter the draught from the pure fount that flows.] The witty conceit of the Rabbins concerning their manna, that it tasted, to every particular palate, of that which he desired to eat; and so the fathers that fed on it, eat as many sorts of meat as they desired out of the same dish; (the more shame for them then to lust after quails;) this conceit, I say, will a little illustrate that great truth of a compendious enjoyment of all things in God. In him alone the deliciousness of the whole creation is enjoyed and relished all at once; and so the apostle's riddle is intelligibly interpreted, that the lovers of God, though they have nothing, yet possess all things.

But this is only by the by. I pass to a further motive to the love of God. If we do not love him, we shall not, we cannot live with him. Surely to live with God and abide with him forever, must needs be accounted the happiest state that man is capable of; and most men (at least when they see they must live here no longer) do profess to desire it. And those few, that do not desire it, yet are afraid of the contrary; even these dread the sentence of, *Depart from me, ye cursed.* Surely there is no man so profligate, that can firmly believe and steadily think of an eternal separation and exclusion from the beautiful presence of God, but would ten thousand

times rather wish to be quite unmade, than be made so miserable. But so miserable must all the lovers of the world, all the haters of the Father be. There are many mansions in our Father's house indeed, but they are only prepared for them of the houshold. The sons of the bond women must be cast out, be there ever so much room in the house to hold them. These children of whoredom, this spurious offspring of Christian mammonists are hateful, and must be cast forth, not by their brethren as Jephthah was, but by that God of whom they falsely say, that he is their Father. Ye hated me and cast me out, Jephthah said. Ye hated me, and therefore I will cast you out, will God say. To them that once said, depart from us, we desire not the knowledge of thy ways, will he say, *Depart from me, I know you not.* But to the lovers of the Father, will the Son say, *Come, ye blessed of the Father, inherit the kingdom.* These shall forever abide and dwell with him whom their soul loved; as they sought him earnestly, they shall find him certainly, and having found him, enjoy him everlastingly. They shall not come and see where Jesus dwells, and abide with him a day, as the two disciples did of old, but for evermore. For so it is his gracious pleasure, that where he is, there they shall be also.

MEDITATION XLVIII.

A further motive to the love of God.

Lastly, Let us consider with ourselves, that whatever inducement there is to the love of the world, there is the same to the love of God, and greater. Is there any worthy consideration that recommends the world to our affections, and does not the same recommend God? I will not here again think of the beauty or excellency of the creatures, having already showed that the God who made any of them excellent, must needs be more excellent than they.

Do we love the world for its convenience and agreeableness to our appetites? Meats and drinks, because they gratify our hunger and thirst? Fields, because we are served by them? Sleep, because we are refreshed by it? Warm houses, because they are a defence to us? Friends, because they are akin to us, because they love us or assist us? Goods and cattle, because they bring in money, or money because it answers all things? And is not God the most agreeable good to us? Have not our souls their appetites as well our bodies? And what can gratify and perfect our understanding, wills and affections, but truth and goodness? Yea, and as to the corporal appetites, although God has ordained such things, as meat and drink, and sleep, houses, and friends, and money, for our gratification, refreshment, defence, assistance, yet he can perform all these for us without the help of them. *Man liveth not by*

bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God, who can maintain us and refresh us forty days, yea, forty years or ages, if he please, without meat, or drink, or sleep. He is nearer akin to us than any relation, and can assist and comfort us in the absence of lovers and friends, and take care of us, even when our father and mother do cast us off. And if money should be granted to supply the want of all things, yet God is more full and agreeable, who can supply the want of money itself. They were rich men, and wanted no good thing; nay, they made many rich, and gave such good things as money cannot purchase, who said, *Silver and gold have we none.* But, to digress a little, I see no reason to grant such an omnipotence to money, nor (with the leave of the learned) such a translation of the text, whether we translate [all things] or [all men.] By answering all things cannot be meant, that it stands instead of all things. It could not stand instead of meat to Midas, who starved in the midst of his gold; for though men should eat gold, as they say the Jews did in the siege of Jerusalem, it would not keep them from famishing. It could not stand instead of drink to the thirsty king; if it could, he who had so much of it, would not have been so prodigal as to offer a kingdom for a cup of water. It cannot stand instead of so mean a thing as apparel; he who is ever so well laden with thick clay, may for all that be in such circumstances that he starves with gold. Neither by answering all things, can be meant, that it can purchase all things, and furnish men with whatever they want. If it could,

how comes money and the want of the most desirable thing in the world to be so compatible, as in our own language to be made up into one word, called the rich-gout? *Ægro-Dives habet nummos sed non habet ipsum*, [The sick, rich man holds wealth, yet not himself.] It often happens that health cannot be purchased with money. Liberty is often not recoverable, life not preservable by money. The poor apostle might have had his liberty, if he had had money; but the king of Judah had money enough, and yet could not get his liberty. Rich men may fall into the hands of such men, *as will not regard silver nor delight in gold*, that they should receive a ransom for them from thence, Isa. xiii. 17. And as for the ingenuity, learning, wisdom, grace, one may say of them as wise Solomon (who did *simul amare, et sapere*, [love them, and yet retain wisdom,] Cant. ii. 9.) says, concerning love, If a man would give all the substance of his house for them, it would utterly be contemned, nay, rejected with scorn; *thy money perish with thee.*

Neither is it true, That money answereth all men, as others interpret it, who thus paraphrase on the words, "Let there be money, and all men have their heart's desire." For there are many in the world, that prefer the favour of God, and their own consciences before thousands of gold and silver. Nay, and those very men, who love money best, and have most of it too, are not yet answered, they are not satisfied by money. I could heartily wish for the sake of those that damn themselves with the love of money, and take encouragement so to do from this text, that

the translation of it were amended, or the sense fully explained by the just consideration of the context, according to the learned Tremellius, the judicious Cartwright, or any one who can do it better.

Do men love the world because it it pleasant to them, they see and taste and handle it? I confess the world by being so nigh our senses, does affect and charm them. But is not God as nigh to us as any thing in the world? The invisible things of him, are seen by the things that are made, *præsentem monstrat quælibet herba Deum*, [each plant reveals a present God.] Well might the apostle say, *He is not far from every one of us*, Acts xvii. 27. Which is but a rhetorical meiosis, or diminution of the actual fact, for he is very nigh to every one of us; so nigh, that he is in us, and over us, and round about us; or rather indeed we are in him, who is the infinite goodness and omnipotent life, containing all things in himself. God is as nigh to our reasons as the world is to our senses, and it is as easy and obvious to conclude, that some one made the world, as it is to see that it is made.

Do men love the world because they apprehend it necessary to them, they cannot live contentedly and pleasantly, nor indeed live at all without it? This may be presumed to be one of the fairest excuses for the love of the world; for who can choose but love that which is necessary to life? How can any man live without money, as the world goes? In extreme old age we shall be forsaken and miserable, if we have not es-

tates, therefore we stick at nothing to get them whilst we are young.

This necessariness of the world may indeed justify the moderate industry of men for the obtaining of a competent portion of it; but it will never justify coveting after abundance, nor the predominant love of the world. For life itself, for whose sake, we say, we love the world, is in itself but a mean thing, and not very desirable; and in comparison of the favour of God, abominable, and to be hated. But supposing life ever so desirable, and consequently the world necessary, and therefore the love of it justifiable, yet certainly God is more necessary to us than the world, or any thing in it. Our souls are surely more excellent than our temporal lives, and consequently the grace of God, which is the life and happiness of souls, more necessary than the world can be to the maintenance of life. It is not necessary to us to live, but it is necessary to be saved. If a man lose his life he may find it again, but if he lose his soul, it is past recovery. Without the world we cannot live, therefore it is necessary; without God we cannot be saved, therefore He is more necessary. Nay, indeed, neither can we live without him. It is because he is, that we are; and if we could suppose that he should withdraw himself from the world, it may easily be conceived, that the world would hide its head, and steal away into its first nothing.

MEDITATION XLIX.

A concluding Meditation.

I CAN imagine nothing that does really commend the world, or any thing therein to our affections, or entertainment; but it is in a higher degree, or a more excellent kind to be found in God. The superlative love of God must needs therefore be most just and reasonable.

And Oh, would to God it might appear so to all men, to all the children of God! Oh, thou Father of men, and Father of mercies, set home the consideration of the reasonableness, necessity, easiness, pleasantness, seemliness, profitableness, of this love of thee upon the hearts of all men; that as thou lovest them more than they, so they may love thee more than themselves, or any thing else! How long, O Lord, shall it be observed, to the breaking of the hearts of thy friends, that thou art hated by so great a part of that creation, that is nothing but the product of thy own love and goodness! What a fearful, horrible rebellion is this world thrown into, when the children of the Most High rise up against their Father, their very hearts rise against him, against his service, against his people, against his name and authority! Oh, sad apostacy of human nature! Oh, lamentable degeneracy of rational faculties! How are men transformed into moles, hating the light, and making to themselves places and paradises in the base earth! How are souls converted into swine, feeding upon husks and

wallowing in filthiness! How stupendously are the rational palates vitiated, which loathe the honey and the honey-comb; to whom love itself is hateful! Oh Lord, pity this unnatural viperous generation, that are without natural affection to their Father; cast forth thy cords of love, and reconcile this undutiful, rebellious offspring, to thy blessed and lovely self! Hear me, O my God, in these requests, which on my own behalf, and on the behalf of all the undutiful crew of lapsed souls, I humbly present to thy merciful Majesty.

Disparage all the wealth and glory and sweetness, and beauty and bravery of the world in our apprehension, that we may look upon them as things unsuitable, inadequate, inferior to our noble natures; mere husks and trash, dust and gravel, in comparison of the proper food of souls!

Display thy Divine excellency, sweetness, fulness, infinite goodness, suitableness and all-sufficiency to us, that we may be thoroughly convinced, that thou art altogether lovely, and that all other things, yea, heaven itself, are to be loved for thy sake.

Let thy good Spirit move upon our affections, and overshadow these souls, till it have impregnated them with Divine love! Whether love be like water, do thou shed it abroad in our hearts till it overflow all our faculties, as the waters cover the the sea; or whether it be like fire, let the breath of the Lord blow it up into a victorious and irresistible flame!

Grant, good God, that this love of thee, may express itself in the faith, love, and obedience of thy blessed Son Jesus, in the entertainment and

prosecution of the motions of thy Holy Spirit, in a sincere love of all men, in a singular delight in the saints, in the constant preference of truth, and righteousness, the establishment of peace and order, the advancement of the Gospel, the favour of God and our own consciences, before riches, honours, pleasures, self-pleasing, the favour of men, the propagation of parties, and all worldly interest whatsoever; in the preference of the peace and holiness of our souls before the gratifications of the body, and the securing of a happy eternity, before the serving of time!

Finally, I beseech thee, O my gracious Father, be daily adding fuel to this holy fire, maintain and increase this pious ardour. Keep us in thy love, waiting for the mercy of Jesus Christ unto eternal life. Be daily winding up these heavy and lingering hearts unto thyself; and carrying on these imperfect longings, till thou hast ripened them into perfect, lively, fearless, endless love and delight, in thy heavenly kingdom, for the sake of the Son of thy love; who hath loved us and given himself for us, that we might give ourselves to thee! To Him, with the Father, and the Holy Ghost, be all thanks, love and obedience for evermore. *Amen.*

THE END.